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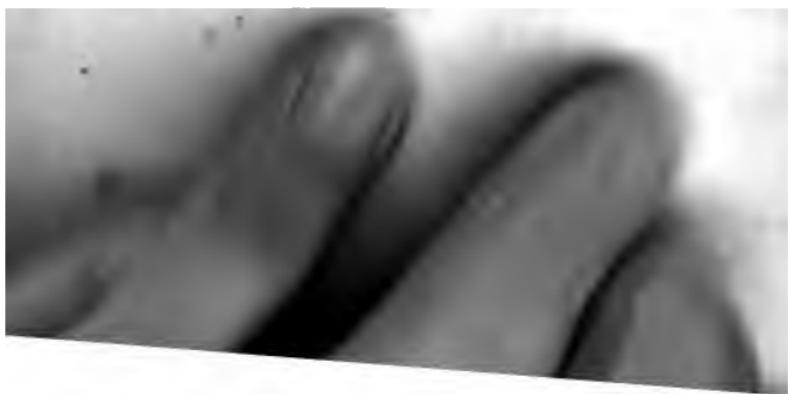
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THE SEA-WOLF.



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THE SEA-WOLF.

A ROMANCE OF

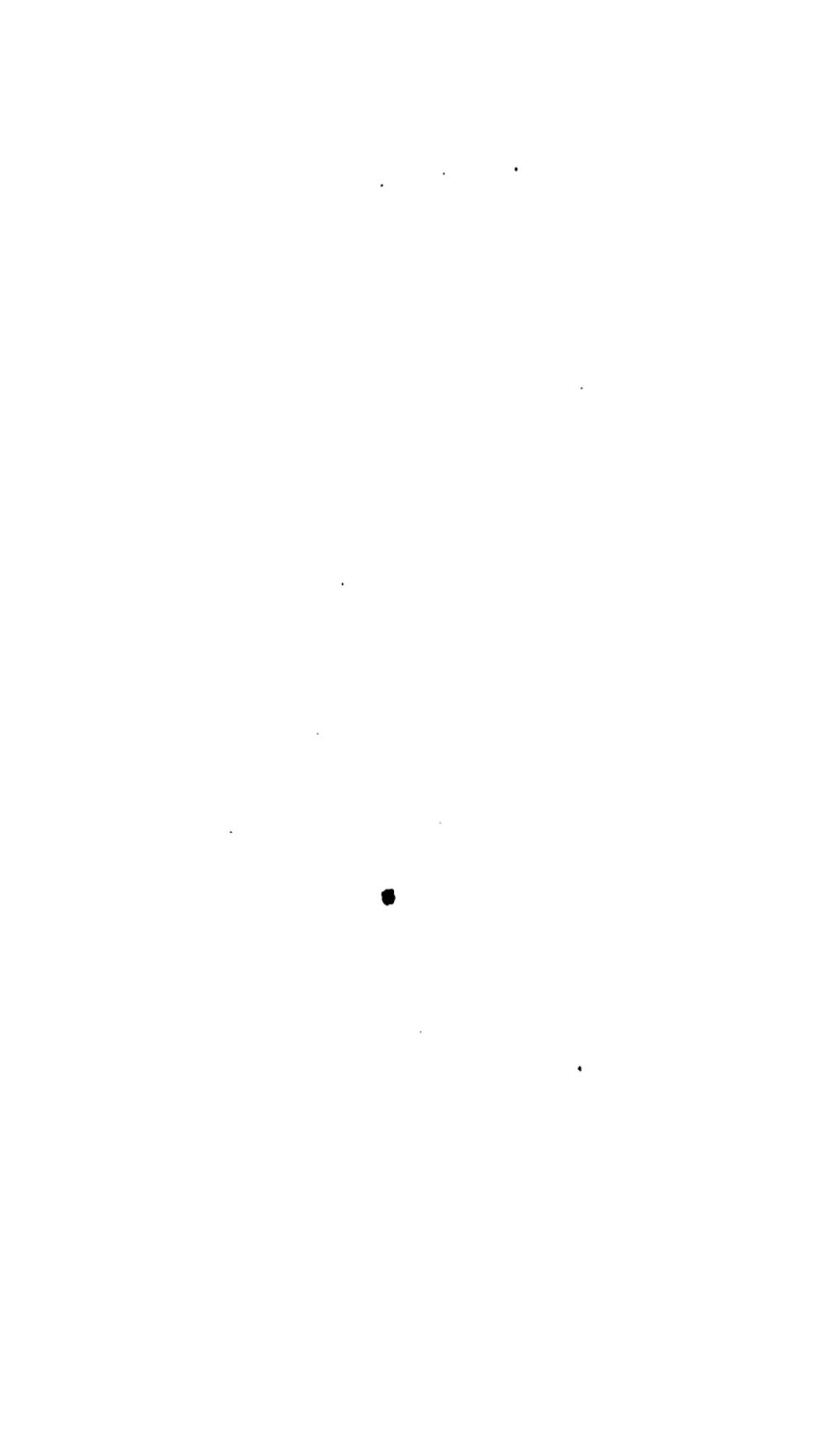
“THE FREE TRADERS.”

“ I saw him beat the surges under him,
And ride upon their backs
 Not a soul
But felt a fever of the mad, and play'd
Some tricks of desperation.”

SHAKSPEARE.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., CORNHILL.

1834.



THE SEA-WOLF.

CHAPTER I.

THE last rays of the setting sun, as they gilded the coast at Shelwell, shone upon a group, which, to a hasty glance, would have seemed to be composed of mere fishermen or sailors. But a nearer view, and a more minute inspection, gave them a more interesting character; and the individuals, like the scene by which they were surrounded, were well worthy a place in the sketch-book of an artist.

The twilight was fast fading away from the low cliffs and broad ridges of sand, of which the coast chiefly consisted; while the sea, which had but a little earlier been crested with mimic waves, was no longer stirred by the light breeze that had produced them, but lay still and hushed, as though a mighty spirit overawed and overshadowed it.

Half way up the side of an impending cliff, and sheltered by a heap of loose sandstone and rock, the produce and the token of centuries of tempest and gradual decay, stood the group of which we have spoken. He who, from his own bearing and

that of his companions, seemed to be the chief of the small band, was a well made man, rather above the middle stature ; and his figure promised such a union of strength and agility, as would render him very formidable in a personal contest. His massive and well expanded forehead indicated his possession of more than ordinary intellect ; but the good effect of that indication was weakened, if not entirely destroyed, by the mingled sensuality and cunning expressed in the other features, but more especially in the eyes. They were small and blue, and glanced from beneath their thick and arched brows, with an expression which spoke of fierce passion ; slumbering, indeed, but requiring little to arouse it into baleful activity. The costume of this individual, and the silver hilted cutlass which was suspended by his side, gave him the appearance of a brigand ; while a something of shrewdness and calculation in his air indicated his uniting the “ free trader” to that amiable character. He occasionally spoke to his companions, but briefly, and with a careless air of conscious superiority ; and then walked quickly to and fro, his cutlass and pistols clattering as he moved.

One of the persons whom he thus occasionally addressed, was busily engaged in sweeping the horizon with his telescope ; and he seemed too intent upon that business to hear or to heed what was said to him. Though the intent quietude with which he pursued his observation, gave him less the appearance of a chief, than was produced by the busier and more vivacious manner of him whom we have already described, his dark and brilliant eyes, his beautiful though scornful lip, and the

whole expression of his haughty but singularly handsome countenance, were more calculated to fix the attention of the gazer, and to impress him with a more unmixed idea of lawless command and perverted intellect. The one might be part smuggler, part outlaw ; but the other seemed wholly the latter : while an attentive examiner of his speaking and fine features would have seen reason to believe that high and virtuous feeling was not wholly destroyed within him ; and that the resolution to be “greatly bad” was strengthened, if not actually caused, by a despair of being wholly good. The entire colour of his life might, in fact, be decided by a single accident : he might be devoted to good, and become renowned ; or wedded to evil, and become infamous, as one decisive step might shape his destiny. That this one step was far more likely to be taken in a vicious than in a virtuous course, his present situation and society but too clearly announced. Of the four companions of the personages whom we have thus introduced, three were looking attentively out upon the ocean, while the fourth seemed to be very comfortably unconscious of their presence, and careless of their employment ; amusing himself by throwing pebbles into the waves, and whistling as he stood, “for want of thought.”

“Mighty fine luck for us to night, Falconer ! if yon king’s ship cross our craft,” said the chief of the party, as he stopped for a few moments in his promenade.

“There will be a storm to night,” replied the individual thus addressed ; and who now laid aside his glass, and shaded his eyes with his hand, as he

looked towards that part of the horizon which still glowed with the last rays of the departed sun.

“ Storm ! aye ! but the armed brig ! Her guns would make wild work with the ‘ Two Sisters.’ Those Dutch friends of ours, Van Holme and Co. are better hands at casting up a bill of lading than at running a cargo snugly. Ah ! the Brig shows rare teeth, and a double row of them ! By the sword of Wallace ! I’ve shrewd fears for our good craft and her precious freight.”

“ There will be a storm to night, Captain Campbell ;” was the brief reply.

“ Hang the storm,” returned the captain, “ ‘twere a fine end to all manœuvring and watching, to see our craft taken in tow by the king’s ship ; a rare end to our speculation—and a devilish expensive one into the bargain. Let me see ! Per consignment, fine ship and fine cargo ; one hundred and thirty tubs, one hundred and twelve bales of silk, forty chests of gunpowder tea, fit for the especial consumption of the Brother of the Sun and Moon, and Cousin of the Stars ; besides divers costly matters too numerous to mention ! As I am a Highlander, such a loss would be a joke to make one laugh left-handed !”

“ Aye, aye ! Captain,” said one of the sailors, whom his companions familiarly called Old Peter, “ that would be, as the proverb says, ‘ a short way to Beggar’s Bush’ ; you would look ‘ as crooked as Crawley-brook’, and the whole gang of us would in future agree ‘ like the men of Marston when they lost their Moor.’—‘ Nine grits and a gallon of water’, as they say at Grantham, would be about

the allowance we should get in your service then, Captain."

"None of your jargon of proverbs just now, Peter," said the captain. "By Heaven, Falconer, the crosses we have had of late, are enough to drive our poor fellows to swearing and drinking!"

"Two accomplishments which, to say the truth, Captain Campbell, they are tolerably proficient in already."

"True! But that confounded brig! 'Twere deuced hard luck, should she run foul of our charming Sisters. Ill luck to her, she has a saucy look. Frenchman, or free trader, would find her a shrewd hand at a broadside! and she has a knack of sailing, too, tight made, well rigged, and commanded by a smart seaman, I'll warrant her. See, Falconer, she is bearing away a point or two on Fereness, and sports her new canvass from flying jib to mizen like a young bride in her wedding suit. Ha! the wind has shifted!"

"Aye, and it's rising, too, Campbell; you will find me after all a truer prophet than you deemed. I have seen on this coast a better manned and braver vessel than that yonder, drifting dismasted and helmeless on those waves upon which but an hour before she had flaunted it so trimly. I would we had a priest in our community, that we might bribe him to hasten the tempest; it may be too late for us yet, if the brig weather the headland. Ah! she begins to feel the coming squall; and is tucking her topsails under her arm."

"Aye, Falconer, but our poor lugger? If I did not know Jack Gull to be a smart steersman, and

a deep fellow to boot, I should still have my fears for our merchandize. He's too cunning, I guess, to attempt a landing to night with yon shark in the wind ; and yet I should be well pleased that our cargo were safely stowed in Myrtle-down. A most valuable cargo ! one hundred and thirty tubs ; one hundred and twelve bales of silk ; forty chests of gunpowder tea, fit for the especial consumption of the Brother of the Sun and Moon, and Cousin of the Stars ; besides divers costly matters too numerous to mention."

"A most excellent inventory 'errors excepted,'" said Falconer, "but we must not keep too close a reckoning against the brave fellows who man the good lugger ;—the less inquiry about a missing tub or two the better, sometimes."

"Aye, aye, Sir,"—said old Peter, "look at me ! you must shut one eye, and wink hard with the other if you'd have all pleasant, aboard or ashore. I don't know what's the rule in the Highlands,"—and he looked significantly at Campbell ; "but howsomever—"

"No more of this, Peter," said Falconer, "be gone ; you know the hour of meeting, ere sunrise. Think more of your duty, and less of your eternal proverbs."

"A good sailor that," said Campbell, when Peter was gone, "and a dead shot with his pistols ; but confoundedly fond of dinnin those infernal proverbs into one's ears. A steady hand has he for the trigger ! I wish we were all like him in that respect."

"What !" said Falconer, sharply, "will you *never forgive* me for not shedding the blood of a

man who had never injured me, and whose death could be of no service to the cause I am engaged in?"

" You are young, yet," replied Campbell, " and you'll grow wiser as you grow older, no doubt. You *should* have shot him. You would have saved us all a world of trouble, and rid yourself and us of an enemy who is likely to be a fatal one."

" As you please," said Falconer, with a forced smile, " we shall have warm work in a day or two, and shall probably be driven to the commission of murder without stepping out of our way for the purpose. But the storm comes merrily on ! 'The Welchman has herded his sheep at sea among the breakers.' Now for a good gust from the north, to bring down the pride of yonder fellow's bunting ! What ! will he scud before the gale ? 'Tis a lee shore, and there are sunken rocks off his larboard bow."

" He'll make land, sure enough, now ;" said Campbell.

" There goes his foretop mast," interrupted Falconer : " how the sail flutters along the sea ! 'Tis a glorious tempest ! Let him but attempt that headland, and ere ten minutes more we shall have one enemy the fewer."

" Huzza for the free trade, then," cried Campbell.

" He is letting out his foresail again," said Falconer ; " the ensign at the mizen peak looks blue enough ! His appearance is not quite so stylish as it was some half an hour since, when his top and top-gallant sails were sheeted home, and choke à block ! The fool ! There he goes up head into the *wind* ! *He might* as well endeavour to bring

his ship *to* on the verge of a cataract as to anchor there. But he means to try it! Splash goes the vast iron into the heaving waters. Now, now! she takes it; a glorious gust, too, with a rare strain on her cable! Thank heaven! there goes the pack-thread, and she drifts right well for 'the Spaniard!'"

"Amen!" said Campbell; "but I will run down to the beach, there is something as interesting in the breaking up of a gallant vessel as in the dying hour of a hero. But, avast! the wind has veered a point or two off shore: she may run by the head-land yet!—No! Her days are numbered; and there goes the storm bell. 'Tis that confounded old fool 'the Prophet,' as they call him; the next skirmish we have, he and his belfry shall topple together into the sea. We meet by day-break, Falconer, remember the watchword."

"I will be with you, Hugh Campbell of Glenvarloch. Yet stay a moment and look around. The king's ship rolls heavily in the sea; — a like berth with a leaky bottom, rudders unshipped, and rotten cables to every craft that may cross our path for evil!"

"Amen!" said Campbell as he departed, "and may the devil himself be their steersman, and whistle them up a gale on the lee of the Goodwin."

"He may be at your elbow sooner than you wish," said a deep, stern, voice; and a dark figure enveloped in a fisherman's garb approached Falconer, who remained standing on the spot where Campbell had left him, on making the speech to which this new and uncalled-for companion thus abruptly replied.

Falconer cast a brief and contemptuous glance

at this person, and recognizing "the Prophet," was about to depart in the road taken by Campbell; but "the Prophet," seized his arm, and exclaimed, "I come not to betray the lurking place of you and your accomplices, though you and they seek my destruction. I come but to warn you against your companions, and to foretell the fate which awaits you in their company. Forsake them, lest, like yon ship in the howling wilderness of angry waters, you speedily and utterly perish!"

"Fool and enthusiast," said Falconer, "away! I war not with the 'Prophet of the Bell,' nor with his artful or insane mummary. I neither fear your ban nor desire your blessing." And so saying, he disengaged himself from his grasp with a gentle violence, and hastened with a rapid step towards the beach beneath; followed by the unheeded tones of the Prophet's voice.

CHAPTER II.

MANY of the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages were assembled on the shore, awaiting the event of the struggle between the storm-lashed ocean and the labouring ship ; the crew of which were well known, having frequently been on this station ; and some both of officers and men having in consequence, connections of greater or less intimacy in the neighbourhood.

Dark masses of cloud were driven rapidly across the heavens by the fierce wind, and the shore, as far as the eye could reach, was white with the foam from the sullen and roaring breakers. Occasionally the wind lulled for a brief space ; and then was heard the sound, more appalling than the roar of the angry winds, of woman in her agony of horror ; and a wife, a sister, or a plighted maiden, would shriek her prayer to the multitude to save the vessel in which she had so precious a venture. But the hardiest sailor present answered such occasional appeal only by a look which spoke his belief of the utter madness of attempting to be of *service*. And the belief seemed well founded ; for,

independently of the terrible violence of the storm, a low reef of rocks lay for more than a mile close in along shore, and, even if a boat could live in the furious sea, this reef would almost infallibly swamp any that might be put off from the beach.

There seemed to be but one hope for the labouring vessel ; and that was in the skill and intrepidity of her crew enabling her to weather the dangerous headland : and they, indeed, struggled manfully. The canvass which had been blown in tatters from the yards, was replaced by other and stronger sails ; and foresail and maintop-sail were spread to the wind, with judgment and alacrity. For a moment there was hope among the gazers who crowded the beach ; but in the next instant the ship rolled in the sea, almost upon the very breakers ; and then came the flash and the sound of the signal guns, scarcely seen, and scarcely heard, but only the more fearfully interesting from that very obscurity.

How often have that flash and that sound preluded death, despairing death ! What hope, what dread, what madness have listened to the echoes of that sound returned by the sullen and fatal cliffs ! And as they have died away, unanswered by a signal from the shore, what pale and silent despair in some of the devoted crew, what fierce agony of others, when death itself must be grappled with, and he who would escape the grasp of death must breast the boiling sea, though even to look upon it seems a task too terrible !

Again and again, the signal guns were fired ; but none dared venture to the aid of the seemingly devoted crew. Falconer had for some time watched the vessel, and admired the skill displayed in her

manceuvres, but, just as her situation became so desperate as to draw a murmured groan from the spectators on shore, his attention was called from her to a nearer and more interesting object. With folded arms and a fierce aspect, he gazed upon two persons who stood near him, though they seemed quite unconscious of his proximity.

The persons whom Falconer thus gazed upon, were Alexander Woodville, and his young and beautiful daughter; who, as she leaned heavily upon her parent's arm, gazed silently, in a grief that *could not* weep, upon the storm-tossed vessel which contained her affianced lover. Occasionally the unhappy girl looked imploringly in the face of her father; but in his stern and composed features she could read neither sympathy nor encouragement; neither the gloom of despair, nor the radiant and glad beaming of hope: all was frigid, cold, passionless; as though the eyes were of stone, the heart within of ice.

Falconer was about to advance and address Maria Woodville, and her silent and stern parent; but pride prevented him from doing so, as he remembered that he had knelt at her feet as a lover,—and been rejected. And even in this hour of dismay to many, and danger to not a few, that remembrance steeled his heart; and he stood silent and unmoved, but still gazing upon her whom he still passionately loved. Occasionally the tempest-tossed vessel fired her signal guns; but she was at times almost buried in the dark gulf of waters; and the few of her crew who still had strength and courage to appear upon the deck, were only able

to do so by the aid of guide lines, so fiercely did the waves dash over it.

At length the vessel neared the head-land. For a moment the spectators gazed in speechless dread, and then a loud cheer burst from their lips, and was followed by the huzza of the ship's crew, as she weathered almost miraculously the dreaded head-land of Ferneness, and dashed bravely on, as though she would gain the open sea and ride out, or scud before, the storm. But the joy of the crew and of the spectators on the shore was premature. A gigantic wave struck the vessel full upon her quarter; the wheel hurled off its wearied directors; and, as the vessel broached-to, and the sea swept over forecastle, waist, and quarter deck, the fore-mast fell, and with the sudden jerk, bore down the rigging and cordage of the main-mast. All was again consternation. The crew still seemed to endeavour to direct the vessel; and to work upon her with the desperate energy of men struggling for life. But their energy was wasted, and their efforts were vain; the ship drifted upon the reef, shot off again from the force of the concussion—then struck again; and the remaining mast fell, and many of the crew were swept with it into the waves.

A few seamen still clung to the ropes and hampered spars upon the deck; but the sea dashed wildly over them; and at times, the hull was completely buried under water. A shudder ran through the spectators; men groaned, and women shrieked. Not so Maria Woodville: she stood silent and still, like a beautiful statue; though

the tremulous motion of her lips revealed to the close observer, that she was *thinking prayers* for the safety of her lover.

Night had now closed in so darkly, that it was no longer possible to discern objects at any considerable distance, even with the aid of the torches, whose lurid *flashings* as they were borne hurriedly along, gave a wild and fearful interest to the scene upon the beach.

And now, as the dismantled vessel drifted nearer to the shore, and was for a few moments distinguishable, arose a cry of "Save them, save them!" and to that thrilling cry was speedily added the prayer of the mother that they would save her boy, her only one; and the almost frantic scream in which some wife rebuked the cowardice of those who would not put to sea, though her husband seemed perishing within their very reach!

The appeal was not made in vain. A boat was launched, her keel grated along the beach, and half a dozen brave fellows sprang into her, and pulled manfully and powerfully towards the drifting hull, amid the faint cheers of the agitated crowd upon the shore. Courage, like cowardice, is contagious. A second boat was launched and manned; but had scarcely left the beach, when the waves spurned her back upon it with such tremendous violence that she went to pieces, and her crew lay stunned and senseless around. The fate of the first adventurers was for a time unknown; though the worst was judged, as within a very few minutes from their departure a broken oar, and part of their gunwhale, were borne in upon the bellowing surf.

The spectators were now divided into many groups. Men bearing flaming torches ran wildly hither and thither, without any apparent aim or object; and women who had relations on board the unfortunate vessel, wrung their hands in despair, and were only prevented by friendly force from rushing into the sea. Apart from these, indifferent alike to the peril of the seamen aboard, and to the despair of the anxious relatives or friends on shore, stood another group; the harpies of the coast, to whom a storm was a harvest-time, coolly calculating the probable amount they might plunder, should the wreck drift upon shore. Loudest among these was old Peter, who wound up an elaborate statement of the sundry perils of the crew of the king's ship, by significantly quoting the appropriate adage, " 'Tis an ill wind blows nobody good."

Falconer had not quitted his posture, even when the boats were launched; but his better feelings had gradually obtained the ascendancy; and when the cry of "Save them!" once more arose above the din of the tempest, and when the voice of her whom, though rejected by her, he still loved, joined in that cry, and called upon him by name, he started from his moody reverie, sprang forward in the determination to succeed or perish; and shouted to the bystanders to follow and assist him.

The brief words and trumpet-tone of one enthusiastic man sway the multitude, even in the most perilous and disheartening circumstances. And as Falconer leaped lightly into a boat, he was cheerfully and briskly followed by a sufficient crew;

who, in addition to the momentary glow his tone and manner had communicated to them, were cheered to their task by his high character for daring and success ; which latter, indeed, had on several occasions been so striking, that, while many considered Falconer a hero, there were not wanting those who thought that, young as he was, he had a “ charmed life,” and owed the success of his exploits rather to destiny than to daring.

The boat was ably steered, and rowed by men who bent their whole strength to their task ; and, having safely cleared the dangerous reef, was in a few minutes within hail of the shipwrecked crew.

Beautifully and yet fearfully glides the vessel which comes to save ; a sweet and a solemn music is in the measured rise and fall of her oars ; and every daring and skilful manœuvre of her crew is cheered by the storm-tired expectants of their aid as the act of heroes.

The suspense of those who looked to Falconer for rescue was of no long duration. He triumphed over every obstacle, and bore off in safety the whole of the crew that had not previously perished. Deep, and awfully anxious was the suspense which prevailed on shore as his boat was descried. In all the various tones of hope, despair, and exultation, the titles of husband, father, and brother were shouted aloud by those whose hopes or fears, now wrought to the highest pitch of intensity, were so speedily to be realized.. Already the boat all but touched the shore, and the agitated crowd could nearly reach her bows, when she grounded with such sudden violence, as to be completely swamped, and both the saviours and the saved were flung

violently upon the beach. None were hurt by this accident, excepting Falconer, who was much bruised, and for several minutes lay senseless and seemingly lifeless. As he at length gradually and painfully recovered his senses, his eyes first opened upon the kneeling form of her by whose bidding chiefly he had been induced to undertake the perilous service of rescuing the distressed crew. Once assured of the safety of her lover, Lieutenant Herbert, who was among the number so seasonably rescued, Maria Woodville had flown to the spot where Falconer still lay senseless — when the pity expressed in her countenance when his eyes opened upon it, was mistaken by him for the love which he had once forfeited; and the hope which she had frozen by her cold and resolute rejection was now again rekindled in his bosom. Rising painfully and slowly from the ground, he seized her hand; and gave utterance in a strain of passionate eloquence to the feelings which pride and hopelessness had veiled, not destroyed or even weakened. He spoke of the days of their attachment, of the misery resulting from his forfeiture of her favour, and of the ardent love he still bore and still must bear to her. Maria Woodville listened patiently to all that Falconer said, but her reply was firmly and unequivocally unfavourable to his hopes. She did not affect to conceal that she had once loved him; and she even admitted that their separation in coldness had cost her much suffering, and that even when she had so far overcome her feelings as to be able to remember him without regret, she had not ceased to pray for his welfare and deplore his errors. She added that

she was no longer free to be reconciled to him, as she had plighted her faith to another, by whom she was beloved, and who was well worthy of the most ardent and enduring love on her part; and she entreated Falconer to believe her words sincere, and permit them to be final, as her resolution was inflexible. For the act of mingled daring and generosity by which he had that night preserved a life dear to her as her own, she warmly and emphatically thanked him, and she promised him her unvarying and sincere gratitude and friendship.

It was with no patient or placable feeling that the impetuous Falconer listened to the language which bade him utterly and for ever despair of that love which seemed to be indispensable to his existence. He felt that Maria was in earnest; that her words were not uttered in that innocent coquetry with which maidens sometimes choose to give occasion to their lovers to exert the eloquence so pleasing to woman's ear, but were in very truth the faithful interpreters of her thoughts. He grasped her hand so violently, and so menacing were his tones and gestures, that she became really terrified, and besought him to release her and allow her to return home, whither her father was already gone. Her fears and her entreaties made no impression upon her rejected and enraged suitor. He retained her hand within his powerful grasp, and compelled her to listen to his passionate misrepresentation of her conduct towards him. He accused her of faithlessness and treachery, of leaguing with his calumniators, and aiding them in ruining his fortunes, his character, and his hopes. **Again and again, she implored him to release her,**

but he continued to pour forth his invectives, and his reproaches, utterly heedless of the annoyance he inflicted upon her; till at length, dreading the consequence of a collision between the sternness of her father, who was now approaching, and the excited passion of Falconer, she suddenly whispered some words in his ear. Falconer was paralysed; his voice sunk into an inarticulate murmur; and, with a look so dubious in its expression, that she knew not whether it told of love or hate, he turned away; and Maria joyfully found herself once more under the protection of her father.

Galling and sad were the thoughts of Falconer as he pursued his circuitous route among the cliffs. The night had now become calm, and the moon, no longer veiled by the black storm clouds, shed her faint but beautiful brightness around. Among the objects thus discovered, was the home of the Woodvilles; and upon that home, once so dear to him, Falconer gazed both bitterly and fiercely, as he contrasted the sight rapture had inspired in other days, with the estranged half-hating pride with which he could now watch the smoke-wreaths curling above its roof without breathing a prayer for the welfare of its inmates.

CHAPTER III.

IN the neighbourhood of Mr. Woodville's mansion, the Woodlands, and not far from the scene of the shipwreck, stood an old wooden tower. Placed on the beach, it was, doubtless, originally intended for a sea mark; and a lanthorn was usually affixed to its summit by night, that it might serve as a beacon. But, in addition to these uses, the tower was, also, devoted to the purpose of a belfry; and its one large bell had done no little service to his Majesty's customs, by warning the coast-guard of the approach of smugglers. The triple utility of the old tower had not procured it the deserved consideration of the authorities; and the tempests of long years had rendered it so dilapidated, and unsafe, that but one individual could be found hardy enough to venture upon making it his abode. This individual was Michael Stonnar, a worthy who was held in no slight estimation by the credulous peasants in his vicinity. Uniting in his proper person, the various offices of mechanic, bell-ringer, and prophet; he also professed to have a *remedy for all diseases, existent or imaginable.*

He was, if either he or his admirers might be believed, equally skilled in repairing a lock and charming away an ague; foretelling changes of the weather, and interpreting a dream. To him the village maidens repaired for information of the features, temper, and fortunes of their, as yet, undeclared lovers; and so numerous were his visitants of this class, and upon this errand, that his threshold was nearly as much worn by their footsteps as the steps of Canterbury cathedral by those of the pilgrims to the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket. The number of Michael Stonnar's avocations had not prevented him from bestowing some portion of his attention upon theology; but his speculative notions were somewhat fanatical, and the style in which he gave utterance to them, had much more of the fury of the Pythoness, than of the prophet's inspiration, or the humility of the sage. Though Michael could not complain of the neglect with which prophets are usually treated in their own country, it occasionally happened that his vaticinations were in less request than usual among his neighbours; and on these occasions he betook himself to the less exalted employment of repairing small matters of hardware, with a zeal and humility very creditable to so great a man. Many instances might be adduced of the perversity with which great geniuses have valued their smaller above their greater triumphs; and it will surprise no one acquainted with those instances, that Michael valued himself far less upon the neatness and dispatch with which he could repair a leaky cauldron, and the exactitude with which he could foretell *war, famine, marriage, and stormy weather*,

than upon his dexterity in tolling the huge bell which was suspended in his ruinous abode. His chief glory, his crowning triumph, was in ringing this until the old tower shook to its very foundation; and some, who loved him not, went so far as to affirm that he sometimes retired to rest with his bell rope fastened to his wrist, that he might commence ringing the instant that he ceased to sleep. But this we hold to be untrue, a mere invention of envious inferiority.

Though Michael tolled his bell at all times and under all circumstances, it must not be inferred that there was anything of monotony in his performance. The approach of a smuggling vessel, the probable rising of a storm, and an alteration in the direction of the wind, had each its peculiar notes of announcement; and the revenue, as we have already intimated, derived much benefit from the exertions of our volunteer watchman and indefatigable bell-ringer, whose only positive duty was nightly to trim the beacon light on the top of his crazy habitation.

Ridiculous as Michael's pretensions to super-human intelligence would appear in the eyes of mankind in general, it had no such appearance to the generality of those among whom he had cast his lot. His grim, uncouth, and unearthly appearance, the peculiarity of his residence, and his strange manners, and enthusiastic style of address, cause him to be looked upon by many with a feeling that closely approached awe; and even the rude fishermen deemed it necessary to propitiate "the old man of the tower," by the offering of a *few pence, or a dozen or two of dried fish, lest*

their nets should break, their haul of fish be scanty, or their boats cast away, and themselves drowned. Like the witches of Macbeth, or the seers of Iceland, he was almost thought to have the power of procuring, as well as of foretelling, a favourable wind or of averting a baffling one. His appearance was well calculated to increase and confirm the impressions produced by his assertions and habits. He was a tall and swarthy man; above his remarkably narrow forehead hung a few hoary curls; and his large and tiger-like eyes, at all times very bright, flashed with a singular expression of cunning and boldness when he was roused to unusual animation. And when he stalked along the beach he usually carried an iron tipped staff, on the upper part of which were rudely carved some mysterious figures. When in society he was anything but stern or unbending; and when his mirth became vociferous, his laugh was the laugh of a giant. His countenance was almost hideous in its grim and savage expression; and even a smile gave it the aspect less of a good humoured man, than of one of those benignant monsters we read of in fairy tales.

By the neighbouring villagers, he was looked upon with mingled liking and wonder; but by the smugglers, who occasionally frequented the coast, he was absolutely detested. They had repeatedly vowed vengeance upon him for the obstacles he threw in the way of their trade; and perhaps the only reflection that ever disturbed the complacency of this eccentric personage, was connected with his apprehensions on this score. We have been thus particular *in describing* Michael Stonnar, on ac-

count of his important connection with some of the transactions we have to recount.

The evening of the day after the shipwreck was calm and beautiful. The sun had set brilliantly, and, though the shadows of night were already stealing over the blue and tranquil waters, the distant cliffs and the silvery margin of the sea, winding along the shore, wore a softened brightness, as voluptuous as an Italian evening could present. The motionless fishing-boats, with their slender spars and half-furled canvass, seemed rather to sleep than to float upon the unruffled waters; and all upon the sea and upon the shore, seemed impressed with a visible and still gladness.

Maria Woodville and her lover stood gazing on this beautiful picture; and its tranquillity was doubly felt by both, from the contrast between it and the wild and perilous aspect of the selfsame scene on the previous day. Their joy was pure; but it was softened into a touching and holy pensiveness, for they had been too lately on the very brink of despair, not to feel, even in the exultation of their love, the evanescent and frail nature of all earthly happiness. Absorbed in thought, they had unconsciously, and without previous design, approached the residence of the Prophet, who had just accomplished the perilous feat of a descent from the summit of his tower, where he had set the beacon light to throw its ruddy glare far and cheerily upon the sea. He was about to greet the homeward-bound fishermen with an evening peal upon his bell; but perceiving Herbert and his fair companion upon the beach, *he warmly invited them to enter his dwelling,*

detailing with much complacency the curiosities which it contained for their inspection. Leading Maria Woodville along with a clumsy attempt at gallantry, he talked somewhat incoherently of "the influences of the stars," and of "the outshadowings of the future dimly indicated in the events of the time past;" and, when they at length arrived within his domicile, he humbly besought her to allow him to foretell her destiny and that of her companion.

The wild and eccentric appearance of the Prophet, his strange language, and his discordant and unearthly laugh, startled Herbert, who scarcely knew, as he gazed in wonder upon this odd-looking being, whether to tolerate his freedom, or to resent it and quit the tower abruptly. He would most probably have adopted the latter course, but Maria Woodville, who had already observed the cloud that was gathering fast and dark upon her lover's brow, prevented him by saying, "This is the Prophet of Wolf's Tower; shall we not let him foretell our destiny? See, Herbert, how benignantly he smiles; surely we have no reason to fear but that our fates will be read from the brightest leaves of his book, and the most auspicious of his auguries!"

"How know you that?" demanded Stonnar, "I have seen the lustre of as bright an eye as your's grow dim; and have marked as sweet a lip as your's close in everlasting silence. The lily may fall before the same scythe as the hemlock; the eye of the fowler can mark down the dove as well as the vulture. But I would fain not send you home *in tears*, nor cause the youthful

gentleman by your side to lay his hand upon his sword. The heavens contain Astaroth, but there is also Arcturus, and the gold on the belt of Orion may be brighter to-night than the glittering blade of the spear of Hercules."

Apparently this rhapsody did not tend to raise the Prophet in the estimation of Herbert, who rather impatiently replied, " You must be quick, Sir Prophet, the weather is but fickle at this season, and it would be far from pleasant to endure a repetition of last night's tempest, even though it were on shore."

" You would think but lightly of that," said the prophet, with a laugh: " but the storm of last night came too soon by one hour, four minutes, and twenty seconds, or there is no wisdom in the stars, and a toothless child might prophesy as well as I." And so saying he led the way to an inner apartment; on entering which, the first object which attracted their notice, was an idiot boy. His long yellow hair hung down in profusion upon his shoulders; and the dim intelligence which lightened for a moment in his eyes, gave a wild and unearthly appearance to his pallid features. The first glance at this unfortunate creature was sufficient to assure the observers that his mind was in the lowest state of imbecility; and the few words of surprise which he uttered, on seeing strangers, sounded more like the inarticulate cry of some wild animal, than the speech of a human being.

" Away with thee !" shouted the Prophet, as he caught sight of the poor idiot, " hie to thy kennel, *dog of the Philistines !*" A loud cry, as it seemed

rather of anger than of fear, was the only reply of him to whom this uncourteous speech was addressed ; and the Prophet was slowly and sullenly obeyed : — the poor boy crawling like a dog, through a hole in the wall, which appeared to communicate with some other apartment of the tower.

The room into which Stonnar had now introduced his guests, contained but few articles of furniture, and those of the rudest appearance and most paltry value. The sole chair was chiefly composed of oak, black with age ; but two of the legs which supported the crazy seat were deal, and of the Prophet's most recent workmanship ; and the living anatomy of a clock, which stood in the corner, was obviously fast approaching its last tick ; its strength of machinery being scarcely sufficient to urge the hands through the mass of dust and cobwebs that obscured the dial-plate. Over the fire-place, which was of a simplicity of construction worthy of our Saxon, or even of our British ancestors, a few astronomical and mathematical instruments were suspended ; among which was a broken quadrant which the Prophet had rescued from some wreck, but of the use of which he knew no more than the Lilliputians did of that of Gulliver's watch. A few old books of exploded chemistry and controversial astronomy chiefly formed his library, which was completed by some few tracts of the time of "Praise-God-Barebones ;" that strange epoch when genuine piety, morality, and love of freedom, were accompanied and contrasted by the utmost extravagance of thought, word, and action. The walls of the apartment were decorated by some festoons of dried-fish, and

by some few paintings, not likely to be valued by idolaters, for they presented, to no eyes, save those of their owner, the likeness of anything in the air, upon the earth, or under the earth.

The decorations of the Prophet's apartment — we except the dried fish, as belonging rather to the order useful than decorative — were characteristic of the mind of the man. Secluded from the world for many years, he had no idea of its progress in knowledge ; and in his reading, as in his furniture, he held that alone to be worthy of any attention or respect, which had the dust and cobwebs of a century, at least, attached to it. Thus, in astronomy and astrology, which he particularly professed, he had read only the works of Galileo and his opponents ; and he dwelt upon the controversies of that time, as though no new light had taught the world to laugh at the ignorance of the Inquisition, and to sympathise with

“ The starry Galileo and his woes.”

In divinity, as in science, he affected the antique exclusively ; and frequently declaimed upon the necessity of adopting strong measures to repress the Fifth Monarchy-men.

Such was the sage, who, after having made his guests aware of the value and age of all his collected curiosities, now proposed to inform Miss Woodville and her companion of the destiny in store for them. Having once or twice ascended to his belfry, to observe the stars, and practised such brief formalities as he deemed essential to his purpose, he commenced a seeming perusal of some writings, *muttering the while* certain words which his auditors

could in nowise understand. Laying aside his writings, he then proceeded to ratiocinate in the following doggrel verses :

“ Well maiden, might thou be dismayed —
Denounced, forsaken, and betrayed !
I see thy lovely cheeks grow pale,
I see thy darker fate prevail ;
When he thou lov’st shall wander forth
Upon the blue and tranquil seas,
Giving his mainsail to the breeze —
Swift as a spirit from the north, —
A shade at sea, a shapeless thing
Shall o’er the bounding waters spring ; —
And while *he* sings of thee, and deems
Thy lovely image haunts his dreams,
A surge shall strike ! — we dare not go
Down to the ocean-depths below, —
But I have seen beneath the wave
For him thou lov’st, the young and brave,
A shroud, a sepulchre, a grave !

* * * * *

When the wolf is prowling forth, and is seeking for his prey,
When the hunter casts his knife and his hunting-spear away,
Then victory shall be with him who twice hath been at bay.

This prediction, which, as far as it was intelligible, was as little as possible calculated to be agreeable to the parties to whom it was addressed, was delivered in a very impassioned tone ; and the looks and gestures of the prophet were stern almost to ferocity. His earnestness of manner would alone have caused his words to be attended to by Maria Woodville. But they fell mournfully and ominously upon her ears, not so much as being a prediction, as from their singular and startling coincidence with her own fearful imaginations, to which, moreover, she had as yet given no utter-

ance. The image of Falconer, dark and scowling as she had last seen him, seemed to rise before her; his countenance lurid with the vindictive passion which she had but too much reason to believe that he cherished in his heart. And thus her own imagination was called inseparable to the aid of the prophet; and she trembled with an undefined and yet unconquerable terror. Not so her lover; he held prophets in general, and the prophet before him in particular, at a very low rate; and, as soon as he had recovered from a laugh, which was far more sonorous than polite, he exclaimed, "Why, sir Prophet! one would think the gold piece that crossed your palm would have propitiated the stars. But your old tower, which rocks like a cock-boat in a chopping sea, and your musty books, have not made your conversation very civil, or your science, I suspect, very sound."

"Ah! an unbeliever!—Go! worship Dagon; any thing is better than unbelief. Sneer at philosophy, and mock philosophers! For shame, young man! What! I warrant me you have not read of the controversies of Father Paul, nor of the arguments between Galileo and Kepler, concerning the tri-corporate form of Saturn, that Geryon among planets! You do not credit the mission of the comet, the herald and harbinger of war, devastation, and pestilence; you know not—but, away, away! You would despise Methuselah for his age, and scoff at the grey hairs of Elisha!"

Howard smiled as the prophet concluded this passionate declamation. This expression of his countenance called forth a new burst of the old man's fury. "Am I scorned and reviled then?"

he exclaimed, in a tone of thunder, and then, his voice softening, as with a changed emotion, he continued, "I grieve for you, son of the ocean; soon shall you lie down to your long dreamless sleep, in an unturfed and unknown grave, where none shall weep over you, and where the rude winds alone shall bemoan your untimely doom!"

"I see," said Howard, addressing Maria Woodville, "that this notable theologian and mighty magician cannot rid himself of the loquacious devil of divination;" and, thus saying, he led the alarmed girl from the dreary abode of the prophet. And as they proceeded towards her home, he so well exerted his eloquence, that he succeeded in quite dispelling, for the time at least, every gloomy feeling from her soul; and, ere they had been five minutes out of the presence of the prophet, he and his prophecies were alike forgotten by her, in sweet anticipations, conjured up by the renewed vows, and passionate pleadings of her lover. And he *felt* as confident as he *professed* to be, of true happiness; and in that still hour of twilight, the world seemed to them both as if it could never more become the scene of crime, or the abiding place of sorrow. Even the remembrance of days of danger and nights of anxiety, when her lover came not, and to her excited imagination every gust of wind seemed to moan while it announced his perishing amid the war of the elements, gave a zest and an exaggeration to her present happiness; she felt that even from past bitterness love can extract a cordial and a balm. And the tranquil beauty of the skies, where the stars in their glittering clusters seemed gazing in the watchfulness of

love upon the beautiful earth beneath them, harmonized with the calmly joyful feelings of the lovers. Not a breeze rippled the ocean; not a sound arose to interrupt the murmured discourse of that loving twain, save the gentle gush of some far off stream struggling through the osiers which opposed it, or the sudden fluttering of some bird among the low shrubs, disturbed for a moment by the passing of the intruders. The placid feelings of those intruders were speedily to be disturbed.

CHAPTER IV.

HERBERT and Maria Woodville had already entered upon a wide path leading to the gate of Woodlands, when they heard rapid footsteps approaching; and, suddenly, Falconer stood before them. Slightly, but not without courtesy, bowing to Herbert, he briefly apologized to Miss Woodville for his intrusion; and then, in a tone of the deepest feeling, intreated that she would, for the last time, grant him a few moments' conversation. But their last interview had not been such as to make a repetition of it desirable to her; and she remained silent, and clung, as if terrified, to the arm of Herbert, who, having by this time recognized his preserver on the terrible night of the shipwreck, cordially thanked him for his preservation, and complimented him on the courage with which he had effected it. Falconer, scarcely seeming to hear the thanks or the compliments, and, making no reply to either, gazed reproachfully upon Maria, as though he sought to extort, by the sternness of his looks, the boon which had been tacitly refused to the humility of his words.

Still clinging to the arm of her lover, she at

length said, "We must converse no more; for the past I forgive you, but I beg, I implore, that you persecute me no longer."

"Forgive me!" almost shouted Falconer, "I came not to crave forgiveness; you will hear me as a suppliant no more;—but I have a word of warning for you, which I must address to you alone."

There was a deep pause for some minutes, during which Herbert looked with astonishment upon his rival; but, at length, as his eyes fell upon the sword and pistols, which he made no attempt to conceal, a slight expression of derision curled his lip.

"It were well, Maria Woodville," Falconer at length resumed, "since thus I see you protected, since I thus plainly read the tale of broken vows and forgotten faith; it were well that, knowing you faithless, I came not to denounce hatred and revenge upon you and yours for ever."

"Pray heaven! this be not another prophet," said Herbert. "In sad truth the inhabitants of this coast seem marvellously prone to divination; and in *words* at least —"

"The proof in deeds shall come hereafter," was the fierce reply. "You command one of his Majesty's cruisers, and I am —, but it matters not what. We may meet in our respective occupations: we will then, if it please you, try the fortune of our flags and the temper of our steel."

"And why not now, sir?" said Herbert, throwing back his cloak and laying his hand upon his sword. "I do not forget that I owe to you my *life*, but I should disgrace my profession and my

manhood, were I to allow you to obstruct the path and insult the feelings of a lady who relies upon me for protection."

"Well, sir?" was the rejoinder of Falconer.

"Here, sir, is my reply to your insults and to your threats," said Herbert, gently disengaging himself from Miss Woodville, and drawing his sword. And then stepping two or three paces forward, he demanded, "Are you prepared?"

"No!" was the reply.

Howard lowered his point and gazed upon his rival in mingled astonishment and contempt.

"I will not fight," said Falconer, and he returned his weapon with a clang into its scabbard. "I will not draw a murder upon my conscience yet. I have been wronged and insulted — my hopes have been blighted, my feelings outraged. I have been thrust from society into the solitude of my own heart; my footsteps have been followed by foes, my name reviled by dastards; and I have thus been driven to unite in the desperate designs of desperate men: but, for the sake of the pale girl beside you, I will *not* kill."

"Kill!" said Herbert, "made you so sure of that? But adieu — I should have expected that even a leader of outlaws, in the dereliction of every moral principle, would have at least proved himself the possessor of the homely qualification of physical courage. As it is, however, I must treat with scorn the insult which I am prevented from answering by the — — "

"Sword, would you say?" interrupted Falconer. "Let your wrath console itself — we may meet again, *where other spectators than a fainting girl*

shall mark our conduct. Courage! sir!" and here he muttered—" It shall be done openly. Outlaws! — they can fight bravely, sir, and well — and they would not grudge you a fair field for the display of your prowess. We shall meet again; and ours shall be no puny strife. With us there shall be no receding — we will fight foot to foot, and hand to hand, and you shall learn that outlaws as you term them, know how to reply to defiance, and how to resent insult."

Before Herbert could make any reply to these words, Falconer had darted from the spot, and Maria Woodville and her lover then proceeded without further interruption to Woodlands.

Falconer in the meantime, went, at a rapid pace, to a village which lay farther inland, where his early days of innocence and happiness had been principally spent. A few houses lay scattered along the level of a small valley, which was so completely hidden by the wooded hills which belted it around, that a person, not previously aware of its situation, might have passed within hail of it, without being acquainted with its existence. Every object looked indistinct and confused in the deepening shadows of evening, as Falconer reached this spot; but his practised eye surveyed the scene intelligently; and, glancing at the village-church, with its slender spire, rested not there, but passed to the cottage-home of his infancy. It was to gaze upon this, once more, that he had now come out of his road; and drawing his cloak more closely around him and shading his features in its ample folds, he drew nigh to the house, once *so dear to him*, but which was now tenanted by a

stranger. Leaning upon the garden-gate, he gazed long and earnestly upon the little mansion, whose white walls were well nigh concealed by the roses and jessamines which climbed, in wanton luxuriance, almost to its very roof.

As he gazed thus, his thoughts were of such bitterness as his deadliest enemy might have commiserated. Here it was that his father had lately died of that incurable disease, a broken heart; here, for a century past, the name of Falconer had been honoured; and in the little churchyard, those who had borne it had been laid to their last rest, amid the regrets and the affection of all who knew them; and the memory of their virtues was still as freshly green as the grass that grew upon their graves. And as Falconer pondered thus, and reflected, that, with the advantages he possessed, as well of education as of natural ability, he might have proved himself as worthy as they, and become eminent, in a higher and more extended sphere than theirs, remorse smote his heart; for he felt, as he stood before the house of his father, and by the graves of his ancestors, that he was truly a stranger there; homeless where his home should have been, and a criminal and an outcast, though descended from the virtuous and the honoured.

And then his thoughts reverted to the sad hour when he had stood above the unclosed grave of his father, and listened to the parting prayer pronounced over the dead, blended with the murmured mournings of the spectators around; and to the horror of that moment when the muttered tones of many voices fell upon his ears, as the ceremony was concluded, and the dust consigned to dust,

and he was left standing alone, unfriended and uncomforted. He remembered all this ; and indignation against others mingled with his self-reproach. In early childhood, Falconer and Maria Woodville had been companions, pursuing together both their studies and their sports ; and at evening blended their young voices in prayer. Their attachment grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength ; and when Falconer at length quitted home, he did so with a promise to Maria that he would speedily return, never more to be severed from her but by death. Falconer's father, who was the pastor of the village, beheld with pleasure the attachment which subsisted between his son and Maria Woodville, and hoped that her gentle and fond nature would, in future life, soften the wayward and haughty spirit which young Falconer had already begun to manifest. But the hope of the good old man was ill founded : and his declining years were to be embittered, and his grey hairs to be brought with sorrow to the grave, by the last surviving bearer of his name ; the son on whom he had lavished every kindness, and for whom he had implored every blessing.

Young Falconer left his home, for the purpose of completing his studies ; but he had not long been at the University, ere he and two of his companions were compelled to leave it in disgrace, in consequence of glaring and repeated misconduct. This was a severe blow to his father ; but a still worse was in store for him. Forgetful of Maria Woodville, and disregarding alike the peace of his aged parent and his own *respectability*, he formed an unworthy attachment.

The circumstance soon became publicly known; and when, in a bitter and sincere repentance, he threw himself at the feet of his first love, and implored her forgiveness, her father interposed his authority, and commanding him to be gone, sternly forbade him ever again to approach Woodlands, or lift his thoughts to its young heiress. However prone the world may be to err from the paths of strict morality in its practice, it never fails to pay tribute to morality in the abstract, by periodically hunting down one sinner as a scapegoat for the sins of those who are too high or too low to be brought to the bar of public opinion. Falconer was selected as the mark for *his* world to point the finger of scorn at; and he had no sooner been banished from Woodlands, than he found himself coldly received, or sedulously shunned by all his former associates. To his haughty and fierce spirit the contempt with which he was treated was intolerable, and for a time he retorted it with a scornful defiance. But the place of his birth at length became odious to him, and very soon after the death of his father he sold his little property, even to the minutest articles, resolved to retain nothing that could ever remind him of the past. But no sternness of resolution could enable him to forget his father; and though the prayers of that reverend old man no longer fell upon his ear, and he no longer viewed the hearth once sanctified by their mutual happiness and love, or heard his faltering footstep, they had a picture and an echo in his heart, which could subdue it even in the moments of its fiercest and wildest excitement.

Soon after disposing of his little property, Fal-

conner connected himself, by chance rather than by design, with the smugglers of the neighbourhood; and their pursuits soon became congenial to him. There was a charm in the character of these marauders of modern England, which accorded well with all that was wild and reckless in his own. He fancied himself to have been “more sinned against than sinning;” and as he felt himself shut out from companionship with the orderly portion of society, he resolved to wage a bold war against its interests and its laws. Reasoning, or mis-reasoning thus, he entered heartily and ardently into his new and lawless pursuits; and his superior daring, and superior talents, speedily made him a leader in the society which he had joined as a volunteer. It was not until he had received this distinction by the tacit consent of the band, that he was awakened to a perfect sense of the difficulty and peril of his situation. Unlike the rulers of a state, the leaders of this illicit association could only rule their lawless and fearless followers by surpassing them in boldness, intelligence, and successful defiance of the laws they warred against. It was by outstepping his comrades in audacity, that he had gained his power: and it was only by continuing to do so, that he could maintain it. And even while successful to the utmost extent required by his followers, as the inducement and price of their obedience, it was still in the power of a single traitor, incited to the treason by cowardice or hope of reward, to deliver him manacled and powerless into the grasp of the insulted and unpitying laws. All the difficulty and danger of *his situation* he had long since discovered; but to

retract was even more dangerous than to proceed. He continued, therefore, to excite the admiration, and to secure the obedience of his immediate followers by his skilful and daring execution of all that was entrusted to him by the wealthy traders, who profited by the exertions and the risks of those who alone, in common parlance, are spoken of as "smugglers."

Such was the man who now gazed in sadness, and in silence, upon the once happy home of his departed parents and their wayward child. The evening had darkened into night, as he at length tore himself from the spot which excited so many bitter recollections, and ascended one of the woody hills by which his native valley was on all sides surrounded. On the summit of the most considerable of these hills, he stood for a few moments, and looked towards the distant ocean which glittered in the pale light of the moon.

"There!" he exclaimed, "is my empire and my home! There have I braved the fury of the storm, and felt a triumph and a rapture in the loud war of the contending elements: and there will I take my revenge upon the cold hearted tyrant society, and teach it to regret having rejected my repentance and trifled with my despair!"

But the exultation of his heart, and the triumphant expression of his countenance, faded suddenly away, as he remembered that an ignominious and untimely death might not improbably be the crowning scene of his ocean royalty; and that in seeking to be the scourge of society, he might become *its fettered and subdued victim, and shriek*

out his last agony amid the execrations and the pitiless rejoicings of its least worthy, and most powerless members.

Still, indeed, there remained recollections capable of awakening the full gusts of generous feeling—a spot of verdure on the heart, on which some spirit of love and affection might have rested, to cheer all that was desolate around. But to-morrow was to be a day of daring and of enterprize; it might decide his fortunes in this world, his doom in the world to come.—He had staked all of hope, ambition, and revenge, on one desperate chance.—He might fail—and fall—and he smiled when he thought of dying.

CHAPTER V.

IN the depths of Myrtledown forest, where the foot of the traveller rarely trod, and the stroke of the woodman's axe was unheard, there was an assemblage of rude and lawless men. A few aged firs, with rugged and bare branches, lifted their heads above the young and vigorous tillers that flourished around them, on a space which, but for these and some old oaks, whose massive trunks were enveloped by the ivy and wild woodbine of a century, would have been a complete amphitheatre of open greensward, in the very heart of the dense forest. Near this spot was a long low building; which had been erected many years previously, as a temporary bark-house. It had now become extremely ruinous, for, though the smugglers frequently made it their council-chamber and hall of banquet, they had not thought it necessary to devote any time or trouble to repairing it. The roof had partially fallen in; and the floor was strewn with heaps of mouldering bark and decayed branches of trees. Its general appearance was that of a *deserted log-house* in the back settlements.

of America ; but the broken bottles and bowls of tobacco pipes which abounded there, told plainly enough, that it was occasionally the resort of a more numerous and convivial assemblage than is commonly to be found in the hunting grounds of Kentucky, or the savannahs of the Illinois. Deep, indeed, would have been the surprise of the traveller, after traversing for hours the silent and almost pathless forest, to hear suddenly the song and the shout of a boisterous mirth resounding amid the giant trees, as though the sylvan deities held their orgies there. And such sounds, at the time to which our tale refers, would have greeted the ears of any one hardy enough to have intruded upon the festal privacy of the true lovers of “ free trade,” and over-proof spirits.

The smugglers, on the present occasion, had made an attempt to light up their hall of assembly ; half a dozen flower-pots, with candles in the drain-holes, did duty for chandeliers in one part of the building, while a fire of green wood, stirred occasionally with the stave of a spirit cask, threw a lurid glare upon the other part, in which was stowed a variety of merchandize which had never yet come in contact with the officials of the custom-house. Empty spirit casks served the smugglers for seats, a full one made an unexceptionable table, while another, which was neither full nor empty, though it bade fair to be speedily in the latter predicament, supplied them with a beverage which, judging from its visible effects upon some of the company, was as potent as it was palatable. There *was no lack of mirth*, though it was the wild reck-

less mirth of desperate men ; and the scene was altogether such as a painter would have rejoiced to see, — wild, and almost startling. Dark figures from time to time crossed the building, partially obscuring it as they passed before the fire ; which at other times, was vividly reflected by the shining blades of cutlasses and barrels of pistols. The assemblage, which was numerous, was divided into several groups, in different parts of the building ; some, lying at full length upon bales of contraband, whispered their doubts, hopes and fears upon the enterprize in which they were all very shortly to be engaged ; while others, who were apparently more under the influence of their “potations pottle deep,” were shouting “Old King Cole,” and “Mynheer van Dunk,” in a style much more remarkable for its loudness than its sweetness.

Apart from these sat Hugh Campbell and one or two other persons introduced to the reader in the earlier pages of this tale. One of these was old Peter, who occasionally looked with an expression of great sagacity through a clink in the boarding, and from time to time, muttered some “wise saw,” which, in his own estimation at least, was wonderfully applicable to the particular time and circumstances.

“Fiddlers, flies, and dogs, come to feasts uncalled,” he at length growled out, “and I’ll be hanged if this confounded uproar don’t awaken half the custom-house officers in the county. They’ll scent out the way to our log house at last, and score us up such a reckoning as we shan’t get quit of for one while ; as well knock out our brains, as *trudge us off in twos and threes to the county goal.*”

“ Much better, to my thinking,” said Hugh Campbell, involuntarily replying to the last proposition of old Peter’s lugubrious speech; and then, after a short pause, during which he seemed to muse deeply on something of importance, he continued, “ It is very strange that Falconer has not yet made his appearance! I fear much that he is detained by some treachery on the part of his foes, or of his friends.”

“ Avast there, captain,” replied old Peter, “ never look at the dark side of a picture, nor think that a pretty girl wears paint because she’ll not let you kiss her. No doubt he’ll be here presently; and, in the mean time, we shall not be on short allowance for amusement, at all events; for, see there! a gentleman is going to give the good company the benefit of his wisdom !”

Old Peter was quite right; one of the goodly assemblage was in the very act of preparing to inflict his tediousness upon his friends, who were well acquainted with his oratorical powers, and consequently looked with all due dread upon him, as he rose, and shouted “ Silence, gentlemen free-traders !”

The worthy, who thus announced his opinion of the worthlessness of other people’s words, and the great value and importance of his own, was a little, fat, punchy man, with very large eyes, a very wide mouth, a very flat nose, and cheeks of a redness which spoke of much brandy in the past, and apoplexy in reserve for the future. He had formerly been a highly respectable tradesman, but he unfortunately had a turn for politics, and, at length, *became so lost in indignation at the vast amount of*

the national debt, that he entirely forgot that he had any creditors of his own ; and, just as he had succeeded, after infinite labour and loss of time, in discovering a practicable and just mode of arranging the pecuniary affairs of the public, he also discovered, that his own affairs were ruined past redemption, and that he could only escape from the horrors of a gaol by making a precipitate flight from his home. He soon found that—

“ Man is a carnivorous animal ;”

and, simultaneously he discovered, that he who wishes to have a dinner for his appetite, must work for it if he is poor ; just as he who is rich must ride for an appetite for his dinner. He had no money for trade, and no skill, and perhaps but little inclination, for actual labour ; so he became a smuggler, and was soon well known in that character under the title of “ Little Contraband ;” and he boasted that the title was due to him as every article he had about him, from shoe to coat, and from the tobacco in his pipe to the hat on his head, was imported duty-free. In early life he had read just enough to enable him to dovetail together some poetical quotations and odds and ends of rhetoric ; and, as he had abundance of vanity, some fluency, and a sonorous voice, he was on all occasions the speaker, when any matter was in dispute in the respectable society in which he was now enrolled.

On the present occasion he commenced his harangue, as in truth, he usually did, by eulogizing with loud vociferation and much gesture, the glories and perils of the profession. He compared the exploits of the worthies he addressed, to those of the

Romans who fell at Thermopylæ, and of the glorious Swiss patriot William Rufus, who shot an apple off his son's head in the New Forest, in Normandy. Of anachronisms his auditors knew nothing; but they understood the compliment, and acknowledged it with the usual politeness of large assemblies, that is to say, they shouted so loudly and so long, that the next three sentences of the speaker were unheard—even by himself.

The orator was both noisy and lengthy; and the act seemed to be as easy to his physical, as it obviously was pleasant to his mental, man. Sentence after sentence was thundered out in tortuous prolixity, and still he remained untired. Not so his audience. Symptoms of impatient weariness had manifested themselves in all the established modes of coughing, hissing, scraping of shoes, and elaborate imitations of the vocal performance of the patient quadruped that chews the thistle. But all these were disregarded by the orator, who was too much in love with his subject, and eke with himself, to have any notion of letting his audience off for a minute under two hours. Above all the multifarious noises which shook the old building, his voice rose high and clear, confounding place, and time, and things, and persons, with a fluency which never faltered, and with an energy which obviously increased rather than diminished. How long he might have continued to throw the pearls of his eloquence to undiscerning and thankless swine, had he been left to his own will, it would be rash to attempt to affirm; but the general impatience at length rose to absolute fury, and Tom Hand-spike, one of the roughest of the band, hitching up

his voluminous trowsers with one hand, and thrusting a huge allowance of tobacco into his mouth with the other, started from his place, and, seizing one end of the ricketty bench which formed little Contraband's rostrum, cried out, " Halloo ! there, messmate, if you don't shorten sail, put your rudder about, and go upon t'other tack, look'ye, I'll run you down ;" and, suiting the action to the word, without giving any time for compliance with his directions, he tipped up the bench, and precipitated the Demosthenes of free-traders into the midst of the assembly. This summary measure produced a scene of confusion worse confounded ; the spirit of anarchy *rode on the whirlwind*, but did not *direct the storm* ; and glass bottles and oaken staves flew about with a force and profusion, well calculated to restore peace, if that could be done by breaking heads.

CHAPTER VI.

THE uproar at length became so wild, and the rage of the combatants so great, that Hugh Campbell, who at first looked on in contemptuous silence, became alarmed, lest serious ill consequences should ensue, and the band be disabled by bodily injury, or disinclined, from mutual animosity, for the business which would shortly require their best exertions. In a low but sternly impressive voice, he reminded those nearest to him of their engagements, their situation, their peril, and their interests; and, passing from one part of the building to the other, and thrusting himself successively into each of the numerous small parties into which the combatants had divided themselves in the course of the strife, he soon succeeded in restoring comparative order. This done, he elevated his voice and addressed himself to all present. He demanded whether they had forgotten that they had to evade the vigilance of those man-hunters—the revenue officers, and to resist them by force of arms if necessary; and he asked whether the late *uproar was well calculated to aid their concealment;*

or their late violence to each other, likely to render them better qualified for the inevitable strife if they were discovered ?

The effect of his address was instantaneous and complete. Every angry passion, every tumultuous feeling was stilled, as if by magic ; and, profiting by the occasion, Campbell now proceeded to make known his plan for their future course, and more fully developed to them than he had previously ventured to do, the particulars of the enterprize in which they were about to be engaged.

He had no sooner concluded, than every man set himself sedulously to work to prepare himself, and to render as effective as possible the badly-mounted pistols and rusty cutlasses, that lay in confused heaps upon the floor.

In a remote part of the building, Handspike, old Peter, Tom Leopard, and little Contraband, with their pistols in their belts and their cutlasses by their sides, held a private council of war, on a subject no less important than the putting to death of their redoubtable enemy, the Prophet of the Bell.

On the first proposal of the deed, one or two of the party evinced some misgiving, and little Contraband, after dilating somewhat on conscience, remorse, and death-bed repentance, demanded, in a manner which would have been impressive if his round fat cheeks and staring eyes, had not made the ludicrous inseparable from all he uttered, “Would ye commit *murder* ?”

“Murder !” said Leopard, “you may call it murder when a fine stout fellow like myself is cut down or shot through the brain-pan, because he’ll not deliver up a bale of silk or a keg of brandy ;

but to tuck up an old rascal like the prophet, is about the same thing in my reckoning, as hooking a gurnet by the gills, and hanging him out to bleach. Why the fellow is as old as the Reculvers; and he's got neither kith nor kin but an idiot boy, two cats, and a toothless terrier."

"That's true," said old Peter, "and he's always in the way when he shouldn't be. When we've been on the beach making a bit of a run of goods, his ill-looking gib was sure to be poking out at the loop-holes of his tower; and then, 'Ding, ding, dong, dong!' goes his infernal bell, and instead of running goods, we must run ourselves, and put the best leg foremost."

"Kill him!" was now the unanimous exclamation; but when, from the general they descended to the particular, and it was enquired how, and by whom it was to be done, each had some reason for declining the task: so true it is, that a body of men will readily agree to that from the performance of which each of the individuals recoils. But, although no one volunteered to do the deed, the deed was not the less resolved upon, and the cry of "Kill him!" was again raised by every tongue. "Kill him!" they all exclaimed,—when at the moment the shout was echoed from without, and followed by peal after peal of wild and discordant laughter.

The effect of this interruption was electrical. The whole of the conclave started up in terror; upsetting casks hither and thither. Handspike, in his alarm, sprung several paces forward, overturning and extinguishing every light he came in contact with.

By the dim glimmering of the sole candle which remained burning, they gazed on each other's countenances, and each read the counterpart of his own guilty and superstitious dismay. As they stood gazing thus, trembling at a sound which they could not account for, though they would have fearlessly faced ten times their number of substantial beings, the voice from without again shouted "Kill him! kill him!" and a strange-looking being, whose uncommonly diminutive size gave him the appearance of some malignant dwarf, the slave and the tool of a malignant spirit, leaped from an opening in the dilapidated roof into the very midst of the smugglers.

It was the idiot companion of Michael Stonnar. Driven from home by the severity of his reputed parent, he had wandered about in the woods; until at last he had found his way to the council-hall of these marauders. It might be even doubted, from the small share of intelligence which he possessed, whether he had understood the dark projects of the smugglers, or merely echoed their words; but his pale cheek was flushed — his sunken eyes sparkled — a glow of animation overspread his countenance, as after two or three attempts at speech, amid half-formed words and broken oaths, he pronounced, and cursed, the name of Michael Stonnar.

Handspike addressed the idiot with a few expressions of kindness: he looked up at first with wonder — an instant change seemed to take place in his nature; then, bursting into tears, he threw himself at the feet of the rough sailor, and with the attitude and gesture rather of a dog than of a hu-

man being, he commenced a sort of boisterous caress.

The very action revealed that, in his half-formed mind, the kinder and softer emotions were not wanting, but were only depressed; and though long despised and trampled on, were not annihilated.

At this moment Falconer rushed into the building: pale—his dress soiled and stained with blood, a broken cutlass in his hand, he advanced into the midst of the assembly. All made way in consternation. He struck his hand fiercely on the middle bench, and cried, “Are ye men? and do ye linger here in riot and revelry, when ye have wrongs to avenge—lives to save—property to protect?—Arm!—I have been hunted!—I have been betrayed! but I hurled the blood-hound from my throat, and I am here to tell ye that St. George is again at sea! he grins upon us with his iron teeth, and flashes his boarding-pike in our very eyes! Our lugger is chased by a king’s ship, within sight of shore!”

“How!” shouted Campbell, “is our lugger making land?”

“Is the king’s broad arrow in pursuit?” cried Handspike.

“Must we fight it hand to hand till we smoke our very swords in the hot fire of the king’s artillery?” cried a third.

“The Greyhound cutter has got to windward of our merchandize; she is bearing down fast on her off Ferneness Point. The Two Sisters must run to shore—we must be there—we must be ready—to rescue or to fall!” answered Falconer.

“Then arm!” was the cry of a hundred voices.

In another moment nought was to be heard but the clash of weapons, or the hurried interjections of the smugglers, as they prepared for the coming strife. They knew that a desperate encounter was at hand ; but it was not in a moment like this that they were about to desert their leader, or their party — they knew that they had not only to contend with the preventive force on shore, but with the crew of the Greyhound ; yet not a murmur was heard, scarcely an oath.

Badly armed, with second-hand pistols or worn out cutlasses, they went forth to encounter a regular and disciplined force.

CHAPTER VII.

A FEW straggling shots were now heard in the distance, as the smugglers rushed at the top of their speed towards the scene of action. No farther attempt at concealment was made, or even thought of; but, shouting and singing, they hurried through the forest, as though they sought by the display of their numbers, and of the spirit by which they were actuated, to intimidate their opponents. Falconer was now in the rear, now in the van, advising, directing, and encouraging; his own heart panting with impatience for the opportunity of measuring swords with his rival. In a brief space of time the foremost of the smugglers arrived on the beach. The seaman who was stationed there on the look-out, after discharging his pistol as a signal of warning to his messmates, quietly allowed himself to be disarmed and made a prisoner.

The blue skies, the rich shores, the morning haze which hung lightly over the ocean, broken into all the colours of the rainbow by the early sun, and the unbroken tranquillity of all external nature, were in strange contrast to the feelings and intentions

of the stern band of men who now lined the beach, handling their arms, and impatient for the fray. A dark sky, and a storm-lashed sea would have been more in keeping with their mood, and more favourable to their views.

The unexpected arrival on the coast of his Majesty's cutter, "The Greyhound," and the unfortunate occurrence of the smuggling lugger, "The two Sisters," falling in her way, left the smugglers no choice of measures, save between losing all and desperately battling for its preservation: that the latter was their determined course, the reader has already concluded.

The morning was fast breaking, though the grey mists of night still hung over the summits of the distant hills, when Campbell and Falconer arrived upon the beach, and saw their vessel, with the skirts of her flowing and crowded canvass sweeping the waves, as she fled before her pursuer of the long and streaming pendant.

The sea dashed over the bows of each of the vessels, and the strained cordage and bending spars evinced that the respective commanders had crowded every stitch of canvass which they deemed their hulls capable of bearing with safety.

"The sun will soon be high and bright above us, Falconer," said Campbell; "there is a red glare in the sky yonder, and the stars look dim and drowsy in the east: what say you? The morning grey is no light to fight by?"

"Twill do to die by," was the fierce rejoinder of Falconer; and he continued, as he gazed on the manœuvring vessels;—"By heaven! if I had but a plank to put to sea upon, I would cross the path

of that dancing cutter, with her taper masts and dandy-cut rigging, and teach those who man her, to give a wide berth to the Two Sisters, for the time to come. What! John Gull fly before such a skimmer as that? I always thought till now, that he was a sailor."

"So he is, and a good one too," retorted Campbell, "but he were a fool indeed to come within reach of yonder sharper's guns. He has a keen look-out for the profits of the concern, and wants to get off safe with his cargo, even if he run for it; and that, between you and me, is a devilish deal better policy than to lose ship, cargo, and life, for the sake of trying the temper of a boarding-pike, or knocking over some half a dozen fellows on the deck of that lass with her long and flowing ribbons."

"He!" replied Falconer, "your hopes may be yet in vain; the cutter makes fast on our heavy breathing merchantman."

"Ha! by Wallace!" cried Campbell, as almost frantically, he shouted out to the captain of the Two Sisters, to crowd more sail, and save his cargo. Unheard and unheeded, his voice fell far short of the object addressed, and ever as he exalted his tones in the ardour of zeal for the preservation of his vessel, some unlucky billow, louder and fiercer than the rest, fell with its murmurs, sullenly, and mockingly, upon the shore. Even Falconer, agitated as he was by a variety of contending feelings, could hardly refrain from a smile, as amid prayers and curses, ejaculations to Heaven, and exclamations to Old Gull, Campbell went over his usual commercial doxology of — "Fine ship, fine cargo,

one hundred and thirty tubs, one hundred and twelve bales of silk, forty chests of tea, besides sundry other very costly and expensive articles!"

But, casting aside all feelings of private interest, it was a beautiful and animating sight, to see the two vessels bounding over the waves, their white sails looking still more white in the dawn; and though no sound was heard, and not a gun had been pointed or a carbine levelled, still the interest seemed more intense from that very silence. Imagination was at hand, to conjure up the feelings and the passions of the contending parties—the hope of escape, strong in the one, and the ambition of conquest, dominant in the expectations of the other. Like the hawk after its quarry, the latter came on, winging her swift way over the sea, whose waves seemed to rush around her with their applauding murmurs, as she gained fast upon her opponent. Her pendant streamed gaily before her in the breeze, and as she glided on, like some spirit of the deep, the smugglers themselves could hardly refrain from admiring the beauty of her symmetry, or the seamanship exhibited by her commander.

Not less intense were the feelings of the party upon shore, than those of the pursuer or pursued upon the sea. Grouped on the beach in stern and determined attitudes, worked up to the highest desperation of purpose, by the excitement of the scene they were witnessing, they could hardly restrain their emotions to broken murmurs, or muttered expressions. Some had advanced a few paces into the sea, to be in greater readiness when the time of action should arrive; others stood or sat upon the

beach, watching like the dogs of the hunter, for the moment when the game was to be started.

Some too, with a consciousness of the dangers of the strife, or with misgivings as to success or safety, stood like lions at bay, as fierce and no less determined; and amid those groups were mingled men who appeared to be alike light-hearted and careless, who made occasionally some jest on the tactics of the vessels, or the gravity of their companions.

One or two stood gloomily and sullenly apart; the dark, and savage expression of their countenances, not unblended with an occasional smile, yet sufficiently terrible in its import, to tell that they were brooding on the desperation of their fate,—on the projects, and hopes, and darings, of their no less desperate will.

Taken as a whole, the assembled band had met, avowedly to support an unlawful purpose. Failure to them was death, imprisonment, or ruin; success gave them but partial relief, or a few days of riotous subsistence. If they failed, if they were wounded—taken; nay, if they died sword in hand, fighting with the courage of heroes, they knew that they would experience no pity and no praise. The noblest examples of daring or fortitude would never sanctify their memories; none would immortalize their deeds, and no tears save those of their disconsolate widows and orphans, would consecrate their recollections: on the other hand, they might experience a felon's fate, an outlaw's grave. Yet they did not murmur, nor breathe one wish to flinch from the encounter;—relying

on their own strength, on the courage of their leader, with swords by their sides, and the glittering barrels of their fire-arms in their belts, they awaited with savage exultation the moment of strife and victory—or despair. Falconer stood in the midst; he deemed that he saw from afar his rival, about to add another laurel to his plume; and, to the superiority of station, to add the superiority of seamanship and success, by making a prize of that vessel, in which all his own little property was embarked. His eye sparkled, and his sallow cheek flushed with an unwonted bloom; and every now and then, the quick click of his pistol fell upon the ears of the bystanders. He had many feelings in common with his band; he gazed upon them with that pride which is mingled so deeply with sorrow and remorse; for he thought of their probable fate, and the beings connected with them. It was no time for repining or repentance; but many, very many of those around him were husbands and fathers; they were the hope, the salvation, and the pride of the anxious beings who would await their return at their cottage-gates—might it not be in vain? He started at the thought, and he asked himself—who was their leader?

The signal-bell of the watch-tower tolled on the smugglers' ears. An exclamation of wonder from the lips of Campbell, echoed by a deep oath from Handspike, revealed that their deep-laid plans in that quarter had been effectually thwarted; but there was no time for surprise; cloaks, caps, and every useless incumbrance of dress, were cast aside; one moment the men appeared like gladiators preparing for the combat; the next, they formed in

lines for defence, and the more speedy conveyance and concealment of the cargo, should they rescue it.

The cutter now bore down upon the smuggler's larboard quarter. The Two Sisters was so near the shore, that the countenances of her crew might be distinguished; and, above all, the stern and grim ban-dog look of her savage old commander, John Gull. On board the Greyhound the figures were less apparent; but there was an air of triumph in the slight form of the officer who stood near the helm, and apparent gestures of defiance and exultation among the swarthy beings, who levelled their sight along the guns, which seemed to grin out from the bows of the swift-sailing vessel.

"She will fire," said Falconer; and he ground his teeth, as he pointed to the cutter. A glittering, like sparks of fire shook off from a lighted torch or fuse, was seen among the crew of the Greyhound; and in another moment, a well-directed ball, bounding along the deck of the smuggler from stern to stem, shivered her bowsprit, and brought down the jib, trailing into the sea. Like a wounded bird, the vessel slightly altered her course, but still fled towards the shore, as her only refuge.

"Now! now! John Gull, fire! or you are lost!" shouted twenty voices; but in another minute the king's cutter had run aground; and such was the velocity of her course, that all on board of her appeared thrown into momentary confusion. A triumphant cheer from the beach announced the hopes of the observers, as the Two Sisters, skilfully avoiding the well-known shoal, ran within three hundred yards of the shore, and beyond the reach of her pursuer's guns.

Then commenced a scene scarcely capable of being described. The sea in an instant appeared covered with kegs of spirits, and casks of various descriptions, which the smugglers towing ashore, in many instances with a rope between their teeth, rolled up the beach; and placing in light carts prepared for the occasion, caused them to vanish, as speedily as if the whole affair had been transacted under the auspices of the Prophet of the Bell himself.

But they had need to make all haste; by the swell of the tide the Greyhound was again afloat, and with more caution was steering her course towards the scene of action. On the beach, too, at a little distance, a band of the preventive force was forming; and although yet too small in numbers to venture an attack, was every moment becoming more formidable, from the men that kept arriving from all quarters. It was not long ere the quick successive shots along the beach, and the wild and desperate outcries with which they were mingled, told that the smugglers were actually attacked; while the threatening attitude of the cutter showed plainly, that in a little time, Falconer's party would be exposed to a murderous fire from her guns.

At this period the smugglers received a reinforcement, by the arrival of four or five boats, with well-armed crews; and as, in the dusky light, each dark object glided along the shore, a rapturous cheer informed their comrades, how welcome and opportune was their assistance. Leaving Campbell, Leopard, and others to conduct the defence on the beach, Falconer leaped into the foremost boat,

and bidding some of the best-armed of his men to follow him in the others, he pulled out, to prevent an attack, which he perceived the commander of the Greyhound was about to make.

Herbert yielded to no man in courage, however he might in caution and prudence. His quick eye had already singled out the form of his rival among the combatants; he knew that that man had been the preserver of his life; he regretted to see him as the leader of a band, met together for the avowed purpose of defeating the spirit of the law; he remembered the language of the smuggler when they last had met; but however violent it had been, he could not as yet deem it as an acquittal for the life which Falconer so nobly had preserved.

The preventive force on shore, animated by the guns of the cutter, now rushed upon the smugglers, and, fighting waist high in the sea, attempted to prevent the landing of the cargo. There was a wild interest in the scene, as, amid the dashing of the waves, the quick stroke of oars, the cries and shouts of vengeance and defiance, the prows of the smugglers' boats struck against the galleys of their opponent, while personal strength and agility, more than the force of fire-arms, or the sabre, seemed to decide the combat.

As Falconer, with a numerous party, neared the cutter, there seemed to be a cessation in the firing, as though her commander watched with interest the quick and measured leap of the hostile boats, which now approached him. But Herbert had a mingled feeling of pride and exultation, as, *whispering a secret order to his lieutenant, he regarded*

in silence the progress of his foes. He knew that if they conquered, he could expect no mercy at their hands ; but not a thought for himself weakened his determination to persevere in the performance of his duty.

On the other hand, Falconer fought as if despairing of success, and beyond the pale of the best human emotions : forgetful of his duty as a leader, and only intent upon the gratification of his hatred—excited by every shout—maddened by every cry—he directed his sole attention towards Herbert. Twice had he covered with his rifle the person of the unsuspecting commander of the Greyhound—twice had he fired, but as the smoke passed away from before his eyes, he saw his rival still unharmed ; the swell of the sea rendered his aim unsteady in the rocking boat, and the balls flew wide of their mark. Then it was that a wreath of smoke coiled along the gunwhale of the Greyhound, and she opened her fire upon the boarding party. The rashness of Falconer met with a sad reproof in the destruction of two of his boats, with their brave and devoted crews. The attempt was madness, but still he persevered ; the oars of the survivors cut the waves with redoubled speed ; closing in almost head to head, the boats, in a mass, made a rush upon the cutter. But Herbert had calculated to a nicety the distance and the speed of his opponents ; first, the jib, then the foresail of the Greyhound, gently flapped in the breeze ; her helm went hard a-lee ; she was in stays, and in the very act of going about, to give her assailants the benefit of her three starboard guns, when Falconer perceived the intention, *and called on his men to pull for their*

lives under the cutter's quarter. The order came too late ; the vessel fired her broadside, and the chieftain of the smugglers fell, almost as his boat struck the side of her opponent. But Falconer was unhurt ; struck down for a moment by the fall of one of his men, he instantly started up, and waving his cap over his head, answered by a shout, which combined the expression of every dark and maddening emotion, the cheer of triumph which had been raised at his supposed destruction. In another moment, his hand was upon the shrouds of the cutter ; but instead of boarding her, as he had attempted, he beheld himself attacked by Herbert, who, with part of his crew, leaped into the foremost boat. A desperate conflict ensued ; doubtful for some time as to the result. At length, overpowered by numbers, Falconer beheld himself hemmed in and surrounded by his opponents.

“ Yield, Mark Falconer !” shouted Herbert : “ every exertion of mine shall be used to save thy life ; every energy employed from the courts of justice to obtain thy pardon.”

“ Pardon ! and from thee ! — take that — and tell her — ” The smuggler's pistol flashed in the eyes of Herbert, but was struck from his hand ere he had levelled it, and the ball glanced into the sea. With one foot on the gunwhale of his vessel, the other on the stern of the foremost boat, Herbert immediately closed on his opponent, with the spring and fury of a tiger. In the fierce struggle that ensued, in the desperation of savage and phrenzied passions, the boat filled and went down, and victors and vanquished were alike hurled into the sea. Nor did the strife cease here : locked in each other's

arms, not a few of the combatants sunk never to rise again. In the confusion, Falconer disengaged himself from his foes, and reached in safety the only remaining boat that his party now possessed. Faint with exertion and loss of blood, almost unconscious of passing events, he allowed himself to be rowed towards the beach, defeated and undone.

The bell of the Prophet tolled from the watch-tower ; the whole neighbourhood appeared starting up into arms. Hugh Campbell and his comrades waged a sort of amphibious war, now struggling in the sea, now fighting upon the beach, while the report of fire-arms, the splashing of oars, the alternate shouts of triumph and defiance, sufficiently told of the desperation of the combatants.

The preventive force now seemed about to retreat ; but it was only the feint of a moment, to draw the smugglers away from their vessel ; when, with every prospect of success, they fiercely renewed the fight. As they rushed to the charge, however, the report of a musquet was heard from behind a ridge of sandbanks, to the right of the scene of action ; and the officer in command sank on his knee, and muttering in a hurried tone some endeared name, instantly expired. The death of their commander was the signal of the discomfiture of his party ; after a fierce resistance, overcome at length by numbers, they retreated to a distance to await the arrival of an additional force.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Campbell, and the portion of the band which still remained with him, at length succeeded in making their way fairly on shore, he in vain endeavoured to restrain their impetuosity. Without order, in wild haste, and with frantic shouting, they rushed in a tumultuous body towards the watch-tower, where Michael Stonnar was sedulously tolling his bell to alarm still further the surrounding country, and thus decrease the chance of any of the smugglers escaping. Again and again the Prophet was called upon to come forth; the calls of his enemies were unheeded, and his bell tolled on in unbroken monotony, as if in defiance and mockery.

Having exhausted words, and proved their utter uselessness, the smugglers now resorted to a more powerful agent. A torch was hastily lighted and applied to the tower, and in a few minutes a large portion of the fabric was one pyramid of flame, throwing a ruddy glare over the sea, and illuminating the country far and near. At this sight *some of the band* spoke of having mercy upon the

poor wretch within the burning pile ; but their merciful suggestions were overruled and silenced by the vindictive denunciations of the majority ; and it was ruled that he should perish, although by many of them he had been reverenced as a prophet, if not feared as a magician. Once they had deemed that he possessed some peculiar charm against death, or some especial power of inflicting misfortunes upon his foes : but, as the flames curled round his dwelling, and his destiny seemed at hand, their faith melted away, and those most bigoted in their former opinion, reviled him as a fool and an impostor. But their fears, their wonder, their superstition, returned, when, as the tower rocked as if it would fall, and the fierce heat drove far away the tumultuous circle of the outlaws, the deep tones of the Prophet's bell rose again upon their ears. With wonder and horror they gazed on the blazing pile ; in imagination they already beheld evil things climbing the burning stories of the tower ; and, far above all, the majestic form of the Prophet menaced them with ruin. At length the building fell ; and, for a time, the flames shot up with fierce and redoubled vigour.

But the foe was again upon them — the lugger was boarded and taken, in spite of the gallant defence of John Gull ; while Herbert, leaping from his boat upon the beach, led on in person an attack upon the smugglers. The appearance of his foe aroused the energies of the wounded Falconer ; but in vain, at that moment, was his courage or his despair ; his men fled in all directions, and he himself was borne along with them in the tumult of their *flight*. *It was fortunate, that in a moment*

like this, he could neither think nor feel ; and it was not until some time after, when he found himself in one of the secret resorts of his companions, surrounded by a small and feeble remnant of his band, that he awakened to a sense of his misery and defeat. But with such a mind as Falconer's, feeling what he had felt, daring what he had dared, surrounded like a magician by the spirits of his own dark enchantments, beings of power, whom his sin and his folly had made unholy, whence could he derive hope to support him in defeat, or philosophy to cheer him under misfortune ?

His very religion, could such a quality be applied to him, was more a passion than a creed. There was more about it of the sensual prostration of idolatry, than the calm, holy, spirit-soothing, impulses of Christianity ; and yet he had not been instructed in the school of the scoffer ; he did not deem it philosophy or eloquence, — a mark of an elevated mind or of a masculine understanding, to scorn the precepts of the moralist or the sage. His heart had been sickened — his affections blighted — his proudest feelings trampled to the earth ; yet he was no misanthrope — he rather pitied than despised mankind ; though, in that very presumption of pity, more unamiable qualities might be veiled, than in the deepest hate. He shunned society, not so much because it had shunned him, but that he loved the companionship of his own dark thoughts ; and yet love had been once the ruling spirit of his emotions ; for a few brief years he had idolized and worshipped it ; but, like most men, who, knowing but little of the world's philosophy, have deemed it a simple and a soon-taught

creed, he had formed his opinion of the human race, rather from the passions of man, or of himself, than from a study of mankind. Yet even in his fiercest moods and stormiest emotions, some kind recollection, some memory of departed days of youth and innocence, some trifling incident, connected with a happy home, or a simple tale of rural distress and sorrow, fell like a softening spell upon his heart ; and even in the pursuit of folly, repentance was at hand to shed her fertilizing tears over the desolate places in his affections.

But baffled, beaten, and degraded, how was it now ? — with what language was he to mitigate the fury of his comrades, — what submission to buy the pardon of his foes, — with what courage and despair to reply to the words of his pursuers ? Of life he was reckless — but he was a coward nevertheless, when he thought of dying an ignominious death.

“ It would be a glorious thing,” he bitterly murmured to himself, “ it would afford mirth to fools, and make the base world wonder, to see a Falconer at the bar of justice — No ! I am not tamed — my pursuers may find me here ! I will be the master of my own fate in this world, though an immortality of ill reward me, in that to come ! — Ah ! make way there ! I hear the echo of horses’ hoofs upon the turf ! — What, so swift to *his* destruction — will *he* not tarry one short, brief hour ? Well, be it so — the best and bravest of my band have fallen — and now — ”

“ It is the coward’s turn to die !” shouted a menacing voice from the assembled group.

Falconer sought but in vain for the utterer of so bitter a reproof ; his defeated and dejected followers

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issue! or he will perish on the scaffold. Dropping on his knees, he clenched his fingers together; then gazed upon Falconer, with a wild and wandering expression of one whose reason had roused him to insanity. The smuggler was about to reply, when, suddenly, shouts were heard from a distance; the hoofs of coming horses rang upon the ground, and a mounted soldier, dashing over the threshold of the building, sprang down with his horse into the midst of the men.

The smuggler in a moment had his knee upon the breast of his rival, his sword flashed in the ready to descend with all the fury, hatred and vengeance prompted; when, stunned by a blow in an unseen hand, he fell senseless by the side of his foe. Herbert started on his feet, and held, for a moment, a desperate conflict with the smuggler that remained; but a strong and well-disciplined body of his men arriving, the poor remnant of Falconer's band threw down their arms, and, owing to their local knowledge of the woods, leaving their chieftain unrescued in the hands of his foes. When Falconer revived, he found himself handcuffed and fettered, mounted on a horse by the side of his rival, and slowly being led through that forest, which had been the scene of many a wild and desperate enterprise.

CHAPTER IX.

FALCONER had been conducted a considerable distance before he recovered sufficient calmness to observe the numbers or to scrutinize the equipments of the party by which he was guarded ; but as soon as he aroused himself sufficiently to do so, he at once recognized, in the commander, his rival in love and conqueror in arms — Herbert ; and he perceived, too, that they were pursuing an inland direction.

Having made these remarks, he relapsed again into reverie ; musing in bitterness upon the desperate state of his affairs. But a few hours before he was high in hope and confident in power. Now his followers were all slain or dispersed, to seek safety in concealment ; and he himself was a fettered and guarded captive, in the power of the government, to which his repeated and daring defiance had rendered him so obnoxious. Nor were these the only thoughts which tortured him. In the hour of grief, that scorns pity, and is beyond the reach of comfort, when hope and reputation have fled, and life itself is in immediate peril ;

even in such an hour, minds like Falconer's are alive to love and hate, and feel them with a double intensity, from the very hopelessness of the former and impotency of the latter. Maria Woodville, now seemingly lost to him for ever, rose upon his mind in even exaggerated beauty ! and he doubly hated his rival in her affection, now that he was that rival's prisoner.

From an elevation which the party ascended in their route, Falconer caught sight of the ocean, and the glimpse of it, though but brief, that he caught, opportunely diverted his thoughts from subjects which he could not brood over long at a time without risk of madness. His love and its hopelessness were for the moment forgotten, as the sea caught his view and reminded him of his associates in the late fatal strife. Could Campbell, he asked himself, suffer him to be conveyed to a certain death, without making an attempt at rescuing him ? But a glance at his guards compelled him to admit that the attempt would be imprudent, and almost certainly unsuccessful. For, though Herbert treated his prisoner with studied courtesy, he too well knew the importance of his capture to neglect any precautions against rescue. Four soldiers, with loaded carbines, kept close to the prisoner, and a strong body of the seamen of the coast-guard, with drawn cutlasses and loaded pistols, preceded and followed him. He gave up all hope, almost all desire of aid or rescue, and relapsed into reverie, dreaming of the past to the exclusion alike of the present and the future.

For many miles Falconer and his guard pursued their way *in silence*; save when Herbert issued

some brief command, or when a soldier muttered an oath to his stumbling or restive horse.

At length, just as the party emerged from the forest through which for some time their route had lain, the shrill sound of a horn was heard ; and a pack of hounds was observed crossing the smooth green turf, at a short distance from Falconer and his guards ; and a little further on, by a cluster of tall oaks, which stood in a plot of pasture land, once the park or chase of a goodly mansion. Falconer perceived a fair and gallant company assembled to partake the diversion of hunting. He could distinctly hear the voices of some of the company as they sang snatches of old songs, while the huntsman was drawing the neighbouring coverts. But from all the rest of that merry and well mounted assemblage, Falconer's attention was entirely drawn by a lady seated on what Dan Chaucer would have called “one fayre palfrye.” The same fair object, and at the same instant, attracted the attention of Herbert, who gave some hasty directions to one of his men ; and, riding hastily off, was soon by the lady's side, and in conversation with her.

If Herbert's desire was to prevent Miss Woodville — for she indeed was the votaress of Dian, to whom he now addressed himself — from seeing Falconer, and knowing his situation, he was signally and entirely baffled.

The appearance of the outlaw and his cavalcade, even while the former was unrecognized, was fully sufficient to arouse female curiosity ; and in spite of the apparent entreaties or remonstrances of Herbert, the fair huntress, cantering up nearly to the

spot on which Falconer stood, placed herself in the path to which his conductors were about to lead him.

Never had he seen *her* look so beautiful ; — the fresh air of the morning, and the exercise she had taken, had kindled a glow of animation in her cheeks. Slender and elegant was the form, which the closely fitted riding-dress she wore showed to more than usual advantage ; while the fine expression of her eyes, and the luxuriance of the long dark ringlets, which strayed from under a velvet cap, mounted with heron plumes, gave to her the appearance of a sylvan deity, or the personification of a fit spirit of the beautiful landscape around her. A silver horn, suspended under her shoulder by a ribbon embroidered with the same metal, jingled like the bells of fairies in the breeze ; and as she gently patted the neck of her horse, and smoothed his mane with her small ivory-handled whip, she seemed but to want a bow and quiver to personate the sylvan queen herself. She had heard much, she laughingly told Herbert, of the smugglers of the neighbourhood ; her imagination longed to dwell on what she deemed a romantic adventure, and she often had wished for an opportunity of beholding some celebrated marauder or rover of the seas. Her girlish but innocent curiosity had overpowered aught of natural timidity which she possessed, and she approached Falconer, under the idea of beholding some being of ferocious expression, and gigantic stature, not unallied in appearance to the descriptions then given in the popular romances of Italian outlaws and Spanish bandits. Falconer *relished* not the idea of being shown like

a wild-beast at a *fair*, or gazed on as an object of curiosity, even by the soft eyes of beauty. Gnawing his underlip for a moment, he turned his head aside; then, as with a desperate effort to make a graceful bend as the young lady's regards were turned towards him, he smilingly held up his fettered wrist, as in defiance of the power of his captors. With the action, and at the same time the elegance, of a startled fawn, the maiden retreated a few steps, and then, as she turned round, to give a last look at the object of her curiosity, she suddenly appeared to have discovered a strange interest in the person of the smuggler.

Maria Woodville was unaware of the stirring events in which Falconer had acted so prominent and so unsuccessful a part. What was then her surprise when she beheld him captive, in the power of his rival! Falconer bowed down his head almost to the neck of his horse, trembling for a moment with the force of his emotions; then he fiercely commanded the leader of his guard to move on, bitterly desiring him not to let him stand there, the object of every idler's gaze.

CHAPTER X.

“TELL me no more of this, Herbert,” said Maria Woodville, as she and her accepted lover rode towards the hunting party. “He was the companion of my childhood, the friend of my father; and however much and lamentably he may have belied the brighter promises of his youth, he must not be cut off unrepentant in the very midst of his sin. If I did not know you to be too noble spirited to harbour any mean suspicions, and too just to allow any feelings of rivalship to operate *against* the claims of mercy, I would promise you that I will never willingly even see him again. But you know me too well to require this: and you will not, — you must not let him die.”

“My dear Maria,” replied Herbert, “you do me no more than bare justice, in supposing that I am too proud and too just to allow any personal hostility to influence me against Falconer, situated as he now is. But I would rather that his murderous attempt upon my life had succeeded, than that I should forfeit my honour, and disgrace my profession, by failing to hand him over to the pro-

per authorities. It is for them, not for me, to decide upon the punishment due to his infraction of the laws of his country. He has assembled armed men, to act in defiance of the law: let us see if any of them will be audacious enough to attempt to rescue him."

"I would, Herbert, had I shared his perils, and profited by his skill and daring, as they have. But do you, his rival and his enemy, act the noble part of rendering any such attempt needless. Dismiss him, that he may live to repent the past, and to do credit to your clemency in the future."

"Maria, you utterly mistake my position. Having made a prisoner of this man, my further duty is simply, as I have already said, to hand him over to the proper authorities, for which purpose I have placed him in the custody of Munro, an old soldier of tried judgment and courage."

"And will he arrive to-night at his final place of destination?" asked Maria Woodville, in as careless a tone as she could command.

"I think not," was the reply; "for, as he is wounded, I have given orders that he shall receive the necessary attendance and aid as soon as he and his escort reach Basingtree, and probably it will be necessary to allow him to rest there for the night."

After some further brief discourse, of a more general kind, the lovers separated; Herbert to attend to his professional duty on board the beautiful little vessel which he now commanded; and Maria Woodville to make arrangements for an affair of greater consequence than her now aban-

doned design of witnessing the boisterous raptures of the chase.

Falconer and his escort journeyed slowly onward all day; and it was late in the evening when they at length halted at a small inn at the entrance of the village of Basingtree. Here it was arranged that Falconer should remain, until the arrival of police-officers from the county town.

The sign-board of the little inn was hailed with a loud shout by Falconer's escort, who had made so long a day's march as to be in excellent condition for doing justice to the best fare the place might chance to afford. In a place of so little traffic that even the arrival of an itinerant ballad-singer was an event of some consequence, calling many a dame to the cottage-windows, and causing the sun-burnt urchins to turn for a moment from the mysteries of taw-in-the-ring, the arrival of such a party as that which now dismounted before the inn, was calculated to give no small delight to the hostess—who saw some prospect of ridding herself, at last, of the sour ale, and still more sour wine, which had long been accumulated in her cellar.

Munro, who had frequently travelled through the village, and was consequently well known to the worthy hostess, led the way into a long, low room, furnished with a substantial oaken table, chairs of the same material, a clock of considerable antiquity, and a spinning-wheel. For the presence of the last-named article, the hostess apologized by stating that it had been in the possession of her family upwards of a hundred years.

“Quite time you got rid of it now,” said Munro;

" but what do you call this?" and he took up a print which seemed to be fully as old a piece of property as the spinning-wheel itself.

" It's a drawing of Abel; and some of my neighbours do say that it's mortal like my son Isaac, the tall handsome lad that held your worship's horse just now."

" Devilish like," replied Serjeant Munro; " and I saw another little urchin by the water-trough, who looked as like Cain as one pea's like another. Is he a son of yours, old girl?"

" Little Methuselah."

" May he live as long again as his namesake; but I'm afraid he'll not; he looks too much like the worthy that knocked his brother's brains out. You hav'n't a serpent in the family, have you?"

" Noa," said little Methuselah, who at this moment entered the room — " mother ha'n't got a serpent, but Dick and I have got a ferret."

" You're a fine fellow," said the sergeant — " should you like to be a soldier and go along with me?"

" Yes; and so I would if I *be'arnt* bound 'prentice to old Sam Brice *what smuggles*," said the urchin.

" Say you so!" replied the sergeant. — " I'll tell you what it is, comrades: we must only shut one eye at a time in the quarters we've got into, or we shall let our prisoner slip through our fingers." And so saying, the worthy sergeant handed Falconer a seat, and, taking another for himself, soon made the little hostel ring with his orders, garnished now and then with a round oath.

The little inn, though not remarkable on ac-

count of any great antiquity, or any peculiarity of construction, was situated somewhat romantically, being so completely imbedded by the skirts of a forest, that it might have been passed unheeded by the most anxious and vigilant traveller, but for the conspicuous sign-board which swung from the branch of a stately and veteran oak, exhibiting to the passers-by the figure of a headless female, as fine as paint and varnish could make it. We need scarcely tell the sagacious reader that the name of the inn was the "Good Woman;" and the landlady so keenly felt the satire conveyed in the headless painting, that she had ever since the death of her husband, threatened to change the sign to that of "The Noah's Ark;" and at this particular juncture she was having a painting made of *the Ark*, with a dove upon the top of it large enough to take the floating fabric in his claws and fly away with it.

Mrs. Culver, the bustling hostess, was the widow of a worthy, who, in common with the great majority of his neighbours, had the reputation of being tolerably intimate with smugglers, and not too innocent of the practice of smuggling in his own proper person. On several occasions the excise authorities had rigorously inspected his cellars; but he was either more honest than they judged him to be, or he had too much cunning and forethought to have any contraband commodities upon his premises; and all search was vain.

He had now been some time dead, but his widow had rarely missed his aid in the business until now; for the company she usually had to wait upon was neither as numerous nor as peremptory

in requiring the execution of orders, as Sergeant Munro and his followers. Those convivial gentlemen, like true soldiers and sailors, with a marine or two adrift among them, showed their sense of the pleasure of drinking by making the most of their opportunity, and they were speedily busy with revelry. Yet they never forgot the caution necessary for the safe custody of their prisoner, who took no part in their conversation, but glared upon them sternly and watchfully, almost despairing of any chance of escape, yet fully determined to profit by any that might unexpectedly present itself.

CHAPTER XI.

As the good liquor with which he refreshed himself after the fatigues of the day began to make some impression upon the sergeant, he alternately played the noisy drunkard and the rigid disciplinarian; now shouting to his men to join him in some rude and boisterous song; and anon stopping the full tide of chorus, and vowing to shoot the first man who should dare to speak louder than in a whisper. His intoxication, or rather his approach towards that state, made him doubly jealous of every movement of his prisoner, whom he placed opposite to himself, and watched with an eagle eye.

Still the song, and the jest, and the glass went merrily round among the escort; who had, at length, their surprise awakened by the entrance of a stout, well-made man, bearing a pedlar's pack, who coolly walked up to the table and tossed down a bumper of ale, without asking leave or uttering one word of apology. Such an intrusion would have provoked a saint; and the company present was little likely to put up with it without remonstrance. *For a few moments all gazed upon the*

pedlar in mute astonishment; and when Munro at length recovered from his surprise, he rose from his seat, with the evident and declared intention of trying what impression the stock of a pistol would make upon the intruder's skull. Before he could carry this intention into effect, he was interrupted by the entrance of the tender-hearted hostess, who intreated him not to injure the pedlar, whom she vouched to be as honest a way-farer as ever crossed her threshold, and one, to use her own phrase, who "loved the king's soldiers and sailors down to the very crown and anchor on their buttons!"

"That's a bit of good truth," said the pedlar, who had shown not the slightest fear of the threatened experiment upon the strength and thickness of his skull; "I love soldiers, they're so brave, and such jolly fellows at splicing the main brace! They'll as soon drink with a man as quarrel with him, and just as soon knock his brains out as drink his health. They're the boys for me. But come, old fellow," said he, addressing himself to Munro, "don't look as glumpy as a pilot a-lee of the Goodwin in a hard gale! We'll have a drop of the old woman's smuggled hollands, and a bowl of brandy-punch to cheer our spirits. I'll stand treat my hearty, so stow away your pistol, and give us your fist! Soldiers for me! I like their dress amazingly; — a man who's had one of your stocks round his neck for a year or two, need never be afraid of the halter!"

Such a speech was not very well adapted to propitiating the persons to whom it was addressed; and the infuriated soldiers were about to inflict summary punishment upon the offender, by tossing

him out of the window, when Munro commanded them to forbear. He was just in the mood to enjoy the exertion of his authority in opposition to the wishes of his men, and he swore that the pedlar should make one of the company, and threatened to punish any one who should offer to molest him.

The pedlar, accordingly, took his seat, and was speedily as busy as his neighbours in discussing the potables which reeked upon the table; an operation in which he was at length interrupted by the request of the sergeant that he would honor the good company with a song. Finishing, at one mighty draught, a full bumper that stood before him, our pedlar, without hesitation or second thinking, commenced as follows.

THE PEDLAR'S SONG.

" There's a sail at sea ! — she bears up on our lee,
 There's a gleaming of steel on her decks !
 'Tis the hour of night, and like fiends we'll fight,
 Though with halters round our necks.

We have but one — 'tis a prime old gun,
 We'll point her as long as we may ;
 When our powder's out we 'll tack about,
 And over the waters away !

Though while we roam, there be eyes at home,
 That may watch for our bark in vain,
 We nothing fear, but steadily steer,
 Our gallant ship over the main.

Though, tempest-driven, our bark be riven,
 As she scuds before the blast,
 Hurra ! we're men, and can smile e'en then :
 'Tis but a grave at last !

Oh ! how softly we glide o'er the musical tide,
How softly and how well ;
When our galley light, like a cygnet white,
Sits, graceful, on the swell.

With muffled oar, then we steal to shore,
'Neath a dull and clouded sky ;
Or off we go, like the shaft from a bow,
When the traitor's step is nigh.

There are hinds and kings ; on the earth's dull things
They may fasten at will their chain ;
But the home of the free is the bright broad sea,
The foaming and tameless main.

Then friends, what cheer ! is the cruiser near ?
We sail 'neath a stormy sky ;
There's enough of light to reveal the fight —
We shall want none if we die."

"Bravo!" said Munro, slapping the pedlar on the back ; "a very good song for a retailer of rabbit skins. But what do you mean by fighting with *halters round your necks*, eh ?"

"That's just what I was going to ask," stammered a soldier, who had just put out two candles in endeavouring to light an empty pipe ; "that's a part of speech I should like to see cleared up. I don't think there's too much loyalty in that song."

"Loyal!" said Munro, who, contrary to the custom of certain persons, always *differed* in opinion from the last speaker—"it's the most loyal song I ever heard in my life; full of halters, fighting, and sentiment. I like sentiment! capital song! "Rule Britannia" 's a fool to it, and "Cease rude Boreas" don't say half as much. Snuff out a brace of candles there: two at a time will do, we must *not quite ruin the old woman*."

“There are only two burning,” said the pedlar, “but you begin to see double.”

Emboldened by the flattery he had received, and warmed into imprudent candour by copious draughts of raw spirits, the pedlar threw away by this ill-timed speech, all the advantage he had gained by his previous address. The sergeant frowned ominously, looked steadily and searchingly at the pedlar, and in an instant threw off all appearance of even incipient intoxication.

“*Begin to see double, you thief o’ the world!*” he at length exclaimed. “If I’m not mistaken, I see two smugglers instead of one — and no blame to the good Hollands either!”

“You might fairly shoot one, serjeant,” said a soldier, pointing at the pedlar.

“Aye, say you so? I’ve more than half a mind to send him in a hurry to old Nick!”

“No room there,” said the pedlar; “there are so many soldiers there, that they are obliged to sit with their legs out at window.”

“Who told you that?” said one of the party.

“Oh! I picked up that bit of knowledge, with some scraps of songs in my wanderings. My grandmother, too, was very fond of the military; and I’ve heard her tell many strange things about them.”

“Arrest that pedlar!” shouted Munro, whose suspicions had for some time been on the increase. “Cleave him to the waistband,” cried Jackson, flourishing his cutlass. “Hang him to the main-yard!” shouted a marine. “Call out the picket! give them ten rounds of cartridge, and blow the fellow over the mess-room!” said another.

But at this portentous moment, one of the party heard, or thought that he heard, footsteps under the casement of the window.

Drunkards, like madmen, are liable to the strangest misconceptions ; and the mere idea of an attempt to rescue their prisoner, was sufficient to change the immediate purpose of the revellers.

In their sudden panic they flew to arms ; and brandishing their cutlasses and swords, prepared for a desperate defence. Munro stood with his pistol levelled at the head of Falconer, his hand upon the trigger, his eyes glaring with the watchfulness of a wild animal about to spring upon its prey. Others of the party levelled their pieces at the windows, the doors, and chimney-place. In the midst of all this confusion, the pedlar appeared the only person unmoved, or uninterested, as he quietly resumed his seat, and proceeded to solace his cares with some brandy-punch, which he had furnished for the entertainment of the party.

Falconer trembled ; yet, though the colour of his cheek went and came again unbidden ; though there was a slight quivering of the lip, and an involuntary movement of the left hand, as if a few links of his fetters, had stealthily been gathered together ; the smuggler fixed his eyes unchangingly and commandingly upon the countenance of his keeper.

Yet was there something so ludicrous in the war-like attitudes of his guardians, the deep quiet which had succeeded their vociferations, and the absurd notions which had possessed them, that, had not his personal danger been so imminent, Falconer *could scarcely have restrained a smile.*

How long this burlesque would have lasted, it is impossible to say, had not the landlady, who thought the shouting, swearing, revelling, and quarrelling of her guests, sufficiently terrible, deemed this sudden silence of still more dreadful import. Determined, therefore, to ascertain whether sleep or drunkenness, or some dreadful judgment, had placed an interdict upon the voices of party — after listening a few minutes, she opened the door of the apartment, and was about to enter, when Munro, conceiving that the enemy were combining for an attack, gave the word to fire. The report of a dozen pistols immediately followed the injunction ; window-frames were smashed, and door-panels shivered, while the outcry and cheers of the gallant sergeant and his companions were blended with the remoter shrieks of the inmates of the house, the yellings of dogs, and the cries of the landlady herself, who by a miracle had escaped unhurt.

“ Conquer or die !” shouted Munro ; “ a soldier’s grave ; or sixpence a-day for every wound in the cause, my worthies !”

“ Look to the prisoner ! secure the door, and die like brave men, as ye are !” exclaimed Jackson, as, —“ Steady, boys,”—“ no winking,”—“ remember your country’s glory, and the King’s name on your buttons !” were the supplementary words, that chimed in chorus to the commands of the leader.

The smuggler’s eyes flashed fire ; his heart throbbed quicker ; he deliberated, whether to stab Munro to the heart with his own sword, or wrestle with Jackson for the cutlass, which the latter brandished over his head ; but it was only the impulse

of a moment. His fetters pressed on his ankles too heavily for such exertion ; and hope again died away in his heart, as, sullenly and despairingly, he crossed his arms upon his breast, and recklessly derided the folly and fears of his excited guardians.

Munro and his party gradually awakened to a sense of their delusion ; the report of their firearms had tended to sober them ; and their leader himself, reviling the folly of the soldier who had first given the alarm, situated himself by the side of Falconer, and bade the kneeling and imploring landlady, as some recompence for her fright, pick up the broken glass, and go and be hanged !

All parties, alike exhausted, appeared inclined towards an armistice. Munro ceased to torment his prisoner by his insulting method of surveillance ; and his comrades seemed to have forgiven the abrupt intrusion, and smuggling song of the worthy pedlar.

Night had closed in, and the hour-hand of the dull old clock already pointed at ten, when the pedlar, whose former reckless and audacious conduct had been succeeded by an air of care and watchfulness, began to whistle, unmolested, a number of songs and scraps of tunes, followed by long and anxious pauses, in which his eyes often encountered those of the smuggler's, with a strange and enigmatical expression.

He had not long pursued this new system of tactics, when, momentarily averting his glance, he encountered the gaze of the dark and fiery eyes of the leader of the escort. He appeared to start beneath that fierce observation ; it might not be that

there was aught of treachery in his design, yet he ventured no more to provoke suspicion, by appearing to hold, even a silent intercourse with the prisoner.

As the evening grew late, he appeared to be oppressed with several uncomfortable sensations, which almost caused him to writhe beneath the scrutinising gaze of the commander of the party ; and when, at length, the latter suddenly addressed him, he started like an attainted criminal, when the judge is about to pronounce the fatal sentence.

“ Ho ! Sir Pedlar ! is that you again ! — a man of strict principle and rare observation, no doubt ; — travelled lately from the north, as sure as the devil’s at Lincoln. What ? let me ask, may yonder pack contain ? merchants in your line of business, do not generally hug up their wares as close as a sucking child, but rather prefer making an exhibition, in hopes of catching a customer, my worthy ?”

“ That is, provided they are in honest company,” was the reply.

“ What’s your name and village, fellow ?”

“ You, as a soldier, Sergeant Munro, ought to have known, ere you questioned me !”

“ A soldier ! claim no acquaintance with me, fellow ! — the dignity of my profession requires no such reminiscences ; if ever you were in the army, it could only be in the marines.”

“ And yet I never saw the sea until yesterday, nor a boat until the Greyhound anchored on this coast.”

“ The Greyhound ! where were you then ? —

Unroll that pack, and let us see what commodities you deal in — quick ! — none saw the Greyhound yesterday, but those who fought for her, or against her, I'll warrant !”

“ I fear my articles are too poor and trifling to tempt you ; indeed, they are beneath your notice altogether.”

“ Unroll, I say ; what have you ?”

“ Nothing,” said the pedlar, with increased anxiety, “ nothing but playthings for children, and baubles, and skewers for sober housewives — tringnets and ear-rings, and cups and balls.”

“ Unpack then — by Heaven ! there is something weighty here — quick ! fellow.”

Forced to obey, yet offering almost physical resistance, the pedlar slowly unfolded, strap after strap, of his cumbrous pack.

At length, ere he had succeeded, the impatient Munro ripped his sword through the last remaining leather, and the contents of the pack, consisting of a file, two brace of pistols, with balls, powder, and cartridges, rolled upon the floor. Falconer started. “ Playthings for children ! baubles ! tringnets ! skewers for sober housewives ! ear-rings, cups and balls !” shouted Munro. The lips of the pedlar quivered — he looked wildly at Falconer, then again at the old clock.

“ Ha, ha ! my merry fellow, your's is a thriving trade, I warrant ; — cups and balls too ! you did'nt mean bullets ? but, ho ! dispatches from the enemy ! what's this ?”

It was indeed a letter, directed, apparently, in a female hand, but before Munro had time to seize

it; it lay scattered beneath his feet, torn in a hundred pieces, by the quick movement of the pedlar's fingers.

"Another pair of handcuffs, there!" cried the enraged sergeant. "Captain Falconer, I present you with a companion, to entertain you on your journey; as he has seen the Greyhound, he, perhaps, may be enabled to give you some short account of what took place between that gallant bark, and a certain Dutch dogger of a vessel! As for the game of cups and balls, at which, no doubt, you both anticipated some amusement; with your leave, we'll postpone it for a few days."

Hardly had the worthy sergeant blustered out these words, before the door of the apartment was thrown violently open, and little Mett, the landlady's hopeful son, rushed in, covered with mud, vociferating at the top of his voice —

"There's Captain Herbert with a few men, attacked, at the farther end of the village, by a whole party of smugglers! I saw them," cried the boy; "I saw them strike at his throat with their glittering swords, and his horse go capering into a dike from a wouny blow — the smuggling boys are rare good stuff — they have got the soldiers down, and the captain bound to a tree."

"Ha! is this true?" cried Munro. An outery from a distance appeared to confirm the story. "Merton, and Jackson! look to the prisoners!" said the trooper. "Shoot the first man that offers to stir — keep your eye upon the pedlar — lay the crafty fox dead at your feet if he attempt but to whisper — I will return in a moment."

He crossed the threshold with the rest of his band, and, after returning for an instant to reiterate his injunctions concerning Falconer and the pedlar, dashed off towards the scene of outrage.

CHAPTER XII.

A DEEP silence followed the sudden departure of the trooper and his men; and, as the sound of their horses' hoofs died away in the distance, the prisoners and their guards gazed wistfully and anxiously in each other's countenances. The embers of the wood fire threw a red glare upon every object in the room, giving to the deeply-marked physiognomies of the soldiers, a still sterner and more thoughtful expression than that which they usually wore.

Falconer, calm and imperturbable, seemed to pay no attention to any thing; but the pedlar seemed more anxious, and endeavoured to catch an unnoticed and furtive view of the countenances of his guards; whose dark features and athletic forms he scanned, as though he were calculating the probable result of a personal encounter with them.

At length, in a tone of calmness which was very much at variance with the actual state of his feelings, he addressed himself to the soldier nearest to him:—

“ How now,” he said, “ Comrade of the 89th,

come, drink! — Why, man, we fought together in the Peninsula, and boiled chesnuts in the camp-kettles on the plains of Albuera! Don't you remember honest Jack Evans? — They always called me honest Jack! — Come, a bit of pigtail — you surely won't turn sulky at a joke!"

"A joke! It's a pretty joke indeed, to go about the country disguised as a pedlar with pistols and ammunition in your packs instead of garters and laces. But you're not going to get over me with your smooth talk, I can tell you;" and the fellow cocked his pistol with an ostentatious deliberateness, which was intended to impress his prisoner with a notion of the utter uselessness of every attempt at escaping.

"Why, for the matter of that," replied the pedlar, correctly interpreting the motive, "my life is of but little value to any one; but to see a noble fellow, who has braved a thousand dangers and escaped them all, tucked up at last like a dog, is enough to call up unknown friends from the very woods and wilds to rescue him."

"The devil it is!" said the other soldier, "And pray who are you that knows all about it so well?"

"One who has done much, and may even yet live to do more," was the reply: "one who is always ready to conquer, or to die with his leader, and whose watch-word, for want of a better, is, 'Falconer! to the rescue!'"

It was no longer in a feigned voice that the pretended pedlar spoke; but in well-known tones which thrilled upon Falconer's heart, as the sound of the *trumpet* upon the war-horse panting for the fray.

Ere the summons was well concluded, Falconer sprang upon his feet, and closed upon one of the soldiers. The pedlar grappled with the other, and in an instant the combatants were all prostrate together upon the floor, struggling like enraged bull-dogs.

The strife was long and fierce. Falconer's opponent endeavoured to loosen his pistols from his belt, while he in turn exerted his utmost power to defeat his endeavours. Folded in a deadly embrace, they writhed and plunged in their rage; each endeavouring to obtain the mastery with all the manœuvres of skilled and agile wrestlers. At length, Falconer succeeded in grasping the throat of the soldier with his right hand; a gurgling noise, a short and deep groan, told the fatal effect with which he did so, and as he started exultingly from the ground, the hand of the soldier, numbed and powerless, but still clutched as in the death struggle, fell heavily and useless to the ground.

In the meantime, Handspike, who had personated the pedlar so well, as to deceive even his friend, had maintained a less successful struggle with his opponent, and was thrown heavily to the ground just as Falconer sprung up from it.

The soldier who was thus successful, drew a pistol, and presented it at Falconer; rendering it impossible for him to advance but with the certainty of instant death.

While the two remained gazing on each other, both uncertain how to act, a strange looking being stalked into the room, and shouted "Fire! what is it you fear?"

Gazing but for an instant upon this new in-
H 2

truder, the soldier, whose over-wrought mind was prepared to fancy every finger-post a spectre, uttered a cry of horror, dropped the pistol from his grasp, and rushed from the room, without daring to look behind him.

Falconer's first act was to possess himself of the pistol: having done that, he turned his attention to the intruder, and recognized one of the last persons to whom he had supposed he should ever owe his deliverance from peril—Michael Stonnar, the prophet of the bell.

“What, Falconer! Mark Falconer, the outlaw and smuggler, now become a murderer also!” shouted Stonnar, as he pointed to the lifeless body of the soldier! “Bandit on the sea, and ruffian in the woods! Glory not in your triumph! A fate as dark as your own deeds will overtake you, yet! I am your evil spirit; and what I foretell for you, *that* shall you fulfil. Did I not stand amid the flames in which your vile followers sought to consume me, while they looked on with the countenances of demons, ha? And they could not even singe my garments or scorch my flesh! But, go! Your hour is not yet come; and for me, I would not shorten your guilty life even by a single day.”

Before Falconer could reply to this rhapsody, or even make an effort to detain the prophet, he had vanished from the spot. His wild tone, and still wilder appearance, and the suddenness with which he had come forward and departed again, as though he had risen from the dead to testify against the evil deeds of the living, gave a momentary shock even to the strong mind of the smuggler. But he shook off the feeling of depression, as distant shouts an-

nounced the approach of his returning escort ; and Handspike, being awakened by the same sound from the astonished lethargy into which the appearance of the prophet had thrown him, they left the house together.

They had scarcely done so, and concealed themselves in the forest, when Falconer bade his companion seek safety by himself. Freedom, so lately desired, and so dearly purchased, seemed suddenly to have lost all value in his eyes. He could even hear the imprecations and menaces with which the deceived soldiers were returning from their bootless errand ; but, by one of the strange revulsions to which his wayward temper had ever been liable, he heard them less with an inclination to escape than with a desire to return and perish, like another Samson, more fatal to his foes in his death even than he had been in his life. He felt chained to the spot by a strange fascination, the overmastering impulse of hate, and desire of revenge.

So powerful was this spell, that he would, in all probability, have remained motionless, so long as to render a new struggle with his late escort, no matter of choice on his part, had not Handspike flatly refused to leave him. Yielding to that faithful fellow's entreaties, he consented to fly ; and, acquainted as they were with every foot of their route, there was little fear of their being overtaken by foes who were comparatively ignorant of the topography. Once determined upon flight, Falconer speedily recovered his usual tone of mind, and it was with the stern heart, and almost with the light step of a wild Indian, that he trod the sometimes scarcely pervious paths of the

forest. He knew that in a few hours the whole district would be in arms, and on the alert to seize him ; but though he knew his peril, he did not shrink from contemplating it, or despair of surmounting it. He might have to wage a difficult and dreadful warfare ; but the prize for which he would have to contend, was no less than LIFE.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE may even yet remain some few country gentlemen who love to adorn their halls with “a rusty lance and a worm-eaten target ;” though they do not “ ride forth on the skeleton of a horse, to course with a sort of starved greyhound.” But the innovating hand has been busy among the latest remains of feudal state ; the castle has sunk into a mass of ruins, and been replaced by a modern mansion ; and of the bold baron or courtly knight

“ Who carved at the meal
With glaives of steel,”

nought remains but the family portrait, stowed away in the corner of a lumber-room, or the mutilated effigies, in the “ dim religious light” of a cathedral, with their noseless face bent towards the headless cherubim at their feet.

Yet there is even to this day a lingering love, among our aristocratic compatriots, of designating as a castle every rural mansion around which a dull and lazy stream can, by any possibility, be

decoyed ; and to give the name of an abbey to every edifice whose rectangular windows seem constructed with an essential aim at admitting only the smallest possible light, and whose little and inconvenient rooms may compete in lack of comfort with the narrowest cells of the most rigid of the Benedictines.

The family mansion of Mr. Woodville, known by the name of The Woodlands, partook not a little of these peculiarities. The good taste of the present proprietor had much to struggle against ; for as the Woodvilles for many generations had continually added, each in the taste of his own time, something to the house, it comprised in its various parts the architecture of the Saxon and the Norman, the Tudor and the Guelph ; abbey-windows and castellated roofs, flanked with square towers, contrasting oddly enough with such modern erections as those which are called " Rose Villa," " Jasmine Cottage," " The Hermitage," and so forth.

There was much accordance between the variety of architecture in the building and the variety in the tastes and feelings of its inmates.

Paul Mowbray, the old butler — or seneschal as he always called himself — delighted to dwell in the darker and more antiquated part of the mansion. There, in his narrow room, with windows not much larger than loop-holes, he would doze by the glare of a lamp which, for its age, might have illuminated the meditative hours of the venerable Bede ; or felicitate himself, when more wakeful and vivacious, upon the stores of cobwebbed claret in the ancestral cellars, or dream of the

grim old family portraits, which frowned from the heavy oaken pannels of the banqueting-hall ; while the French waiting-maid of “ Miss Maria” declared that she was terrified to death whenever she crossed the threshold of such a gloomy place, and was ready to die at the bare idea of hearing the old clock in the square turret strike the midnight hour. Alexander Woodville himself appeared equally divided between the ancient and modern portions of his mansion — stealing away on a summer’s evening to study his favourite authors in the one, or else coming forth in the dull and dark seclusion of winter to listen to the sound of his daughter’s harp, or the sweeter melody of her voice, as he tarried at the door of her elegant little boudoir, up whose low casement-windows the wild rose and crimson fuscia crept and blossomed.

Maria Woodville loved to roam through the halls of her ancestors, to trace in their fading countenances the various passions and feelings assigned to them by tradition, and to borrow from the bearing of the noblest or most lovely, an expression wherewith to enrich the stores of her portfolio. She was ever the most constant auditor of the family chronicles of Paul Mowbray ; ever the most patient and indulgent listener to the description of the various ancestral relics of which he was guardian.

Though sometimes with a smile, which the sternest of her forefathers might have forgiven, she gazed on the silver horse shoe, which some “ Sir Hugh” picked up, struck off from the hoofs of a phantom adversary, or, with a look equally incredulous, recognized the battle-axe of “ Sir Willoughby,”

which shivered at one blow the iron gate of Goring Castle, in the wars of Stephen of Blois and the Empress Matilda. Paul Mowbray, though a man of the strictest piety, cherished with greater zest the relics of antiquity, than the records of modern improvement. Hence he was almost a walking epitaph, and knew by rote the histories, marriages, deaths, and alliances of all the neighbouring families of the requisite date of antiquity. He was for ever stumbling among grave-stones, deciphering moss-covered tablets and musty inscriptions; a sort of living genealogy, which annually gave forth fresh and vigorous branches, as the scions of aristocracy arose around him. In heraldry, the Garter King at Arms was not more perfect; he even judged of the worth or importance of mankind by the extent of quartering upon their escutcheons.

There was a method and precision about the old steward, which almost amounted to eccentricity; and frequently rendered him the jest and laughing-stock of the village wits. Following the custom of many celebrated men in the division of their time, he arose regularly at eight o'clock, devoted fifteen minutes to breakfast, forty minutes to a strict survey of almost every brick and cornice of the mansion, an hour and twenty minutes for the administration of his accounts, another hour for an inspection of the cellar, and the various wines which it contained; reserving time, in the meanwhile, for a game of racket, or cassino, with any one whom he could induce to play with him; and then employing whatever leisure he had left, previous to his dinner hour, in oiling, and examining, and in-

terminably winding up, the old hereditary clock ; until at last the day wore away, and, as the above-described clock was on the stroke of nine, his right foot was regularly on the first step of the winding staircase which led to his apartment in the tower, the gleam of his lamp being seen, as, with a measured stride, in his ascent, with each stroke of the clock, he contrived to reach one of the nine loop-holed windows in each successive circle. To all this exactness he added a deep and devoted attachment, a feeling almost as strong as religion itself, to the family among whom he had vegetated, rather than lived, so many years.

He was ever flitting about in the grey twilight of antiquity, worshipping all that was worm-eaten and venerable ; in the very simplicity of his diet, imitating the custom of his ancestors, ever banishing the potatoe from his table, as a dangerous innovation, because he had learnt that its first importation into this country could not boast of a greater antiquity than the days of Sir Walter Raleigh.

Alexander Woodville was fully aware of the inconvenience and non-descript appearance of his family mansion ; but whatever improvements his taste naturally prompted, his slender resources and frugal habits forbade ; hence he contented himself with the less expensive task of modernizing and improving the grounds and gardens. Sallying forth by daybreak, like another Jack-the-Giant-Killer, with axe and saw in hand, to annihilate whole rows of grotesque and frightful figures, cut and trimmed out of holly, and yew, and box, and

hawthorn, standing up in their still and formal attitudes, like vegetable personifications of the dark ages.

To the old steward this act of his master's was most unpalatable ; and for many a night he believed himself haunted by the apparition of a certain Ralph Cavendish de Roos, the family gardener ; to whose taste, two hundred and fifty years ago, the grounds of Woodlands owed the erection of these then embryo giants and verdant sons of Magog. But the fears or expostulations of Mowbray had little effect ; and even had the old man gone on his knees, and tendered the resignation of his stewardship to the last male heir of that house in which his office had been so many years hereditary, that resignation, he knew, would be received with all the coolness of a monarch accepting the seals of an unpopular minister.

Alexander Woodville was a man of a peculiar order ; with a family escutcheon which embraced fourteen quarterings, he appeared to the world to despise alike the aristocracy of birth, and the influence of rank.

From his hale appearance, and a certain rusticity in his garb, he might, at first sight, have been mistaken for one of the more respectable yeomen of the county ; but, on a nearer inspection, the intelligence which sparkled in his eyes — the firmness of character, and resolution of will, which seemed stamped in the play of every feature, announced that he was rather one who had lived amid troubled scenes, and encountered fierce and stormy passions, than always devoted his days to the tranquillity of a rural life. He was a remarkable man — a



being apparently born out of his age ; one fitted for the iron times of war and tumult ; able, without enthusiasm to brave dangers before which others might quail ; and without ambition to rise, by the mere force of character, and strength of intellect, above ordinary men.

His early life had been a series of vicissitude and misfortune. All his examples of man — all his opinions and theories of mankind were darkened, and perhaps perverted, by the shadowy medium of these early scenes. His religion was more of the head than the heart ; there was more rhetoric than devotion in his prayers, and, had he lived in the days of Job, he would have argued and reasoned with Divinity, with a similar coolness and confidence. His was a stern philosophy, acquired in a still sterner school. Although the name was not then fashionable, there was a sort of *ultra-utilitarianism* in his principles : he had no feeling for what may be called the poetry of life ; and not the shadow of an idea of all those beautiful emotions and glorious aspirations, which seem to glitter above the reach of our earthly hopes, and, like bright stars, light us on through the wide and interminable regions of imagination. He had a strange fancy — it could not be delight, for that feeling he professed not understand, — but a strange propensity to witnessing scenes of earthly, misery, and sorrow, and degradation, for the purpose of ascertaining if he had perfected, so far as regarded himself, his favourite philosophy — to wandering into scenes of desolating and appalling misery, and of wild and luxurious mirth — to stalking in amid mourners and masquers alike, to learn if he had yet succeeded in stifling every emotion of the heart !

Fortunately, perhaps from some misgivings as to the correctness of his theories, Woodville had not as yet sought to impart his principles to the mind of his daughter; and, although Maria derived the chief part of her education from his tuition, he had allowed her religious views, her feelings, sentiments and hopes, to brighten under the care of other friends and instructors, selected with more judgment than his character would appear to warrant.

His affection for this daughter was deep-seated and powerful; yet he was never known to express his love by any endearing epithet: his solicitude for her welfare was unbounded, yet, beyond the selection of her companions, he hardly ever sought to influence her conduct by his advice or exhortations. He deemed, perhaps, that his principles were fitted only for man, and not for the softer susceptibility of woman's heart.

There was another inconsistency in his character, besides that affection, which seemed to flourish young and green, amid the wilderness of a heart so desolate — an enthusiasm, for classical history, and the heroism and worth, it so often registers. His eyes would glisten with unwonted fire, his manner assume unusual vehemence, and his language burst forth into a strain of impetuous eloquence upon the subject of his admiration. The philosophy, the painting, in short, every branch of art or science, which the ancients cultivated, tended to confirm him in the utter contempt he felt for all modern efforts: and, thus, he could speak with enthusiasm of the magnanimity of men who suffered persecution in the cause of science; and *claim, in glowing language, on the action of a Cornelia, devoting her children to the common-*

wealth, or the heroism of a Spartan Leonidas ; yet feel no throb of patriotism in his own heart. Strange, that he could read with delight of the deeds of men who struck down oppression, and sealed, with suffering and death, the freedom of their country, without carrying the moral home to his own heart — without feeling one sentiment of patriotism, or being warmed with one spark of devotion, for the memory of many a brave and good man, whom he had himself known, and by whose grave he had stood, in all the mockery of mourning.

CHAPTER XIV.

THOUGH Maria Woodville was indescribably dear to her father, his wayward temper, rendered doubly perverse by his Stoicism—which, though at first only an affectation, was now a reality, so far as its resistance to ordinary tests of feeling could prove it,—would not allow him to manifest it. And as she grew in years, his cold and repulsive mode of meeting her attempts at winning him to a kinder and more cheerful demeanour, inflicted frequent and great pain upon the warm-hearted girl.

If, however, her heart suffered from this cause, her mind was strengthened and improved by it; as she was early accustomed to be thrown back upon her own resources, to seek both consolation and amusement. And thus it came to pass that, to her father's enthusiasm for the glories of ancient art and literature, she united much of his decision of character, but without any share of his apathy.

The capture of Falconer and the peril in which she knew him to be placed, called up all the energy which had hitherto slumbered in her breast, undiscovered even by herself. She had long since de-

terminated to forget him as a lover, but she could not determine to forget that she once had loved him ; and now that he was in imminent peril of an ignominious and untimely death, his name had an interest in her mind, which otherwise nothing could have procured for it.

Perhaps, though Maria Woodville was herself unsuspicuous of the fact, there was something in the romance of his late situation and bearing, which pleaded as strongly for him as his present peril; for though he had been a leader only of outlaws, he had been a leader, and both a bold and skilful one;—and do not courage and command give strong recommendations to the admiration of woman ?

Whatever was the metaphysical road by which she arrived at the conclusion, she did conclude, after much thought and many tears, that she ought to dare to free him from bondage and save him from death. Her father would have encouraged such a feeling, without shuddering at the thought, that the character of a heroine was one bought, too often, with danger, and rewarded with a broken-heart.

On the evening following the events detailed in a preceding chapter, the young commander of the Greyhound arrived at Woodlands. Having wandered through the winding and antiquated walks of the garden, and listened for some time to Paul Mowbray's pathetic account of the fall of the giants of the shrubbery, Herbert retired to the drawing-room, to hear some of Maria's favourite songs. Here, to his surprise, he found her father. Woodville coldly greeted the young sailor, and after asking a few formal questions concerning the

health and welfare of his friends, retired to the farther end of the apartment, and throwing up the window sash, stood, with folded arms, in silent contemplation of the ocean, as it might be seen in the distance, beyond the avenues of his domain.

Ever merry was wont to be the laugh, and light the step of the young heiress of Woodlands. Ever did she seem to shed cheerfulness around her; while her mirth found at times, an echo in the heart of even her stern father, and lighted up his countenance with a smile. But, on the present occasion, she was more than usually thoughtful. In vain did her lover urge her to sing; her voice faltered; and there was a shade of deep and unwonted anxiety on her brow. Her eyes were often turned towards her father; but he still retained his immovable position, gazing upon the distant sea. At one time, she seemed about to address him; then, again, as if mastering her feelings, or assuming a fortitude she did not possess, she turned towards Herbert, and silently accepted his offer, to accompany him in another song.

Scarcely had she commenced, when placing her hand upon her lover's shoulder, she exclaimed—“There! it was the sound again—the silver whistle, and the heavy echo of a step!—Nay, forgive me—it was not the echo of a step nor a signal, Herbert—but the rose buds stirred by the wind, tapping against the window—let us sing again—let us sing again.”

“Whose step?” asked Herbert, laying down the song upon the piano,—“what intruder, and at such an hour? By heaven—”

“Swear not at all, noble captain,” said Maria,

as, gently restraining her lover from the attempt which he made to advance to the casement, she fixed her eyes earnestly and anxiously upon his countenance. "Hush!" she exclaimed, "hush! most noble captain of the seas, there is no step beneath my window, more fearful than the tread of old Maske, my father's greyhound, or the little antelope which we left upon the lawn a few minutes since; fear not that I ever listen to the serenade of a freebooter, or converse with bandits or——"

"Smugglers!" said Herbert with a smile, which instantly vanished, as he thought he could not read in the countenance of his mistress, that pure consciousness of innocence, which he had hoped to have there seen indicated.

"Look at my father," said Maria, after a long deep pause: "Look at my father! his eyes are wandering over the distant waters, as though he had an argosy at sea; or, like our ancestor, Sir Everard, who, by the bye, was more of a pirate than an honest man, appears to be watching the movements of yonder sail, with the keenness of the eagle about to swoop upon its prey. Shall I sing your boat-song, Herbert?"

"Yes, if you are able," was the almost unconscious reply of the young sailor.

Scarcely had she again commenced her song, before starting up and approaching the window, she exclaimed—"It is there! there! as I hoped—the signal!—speak not, breathe not!—he has escaped! he has escaped!—thank heaven! he yet is free!"

"Who has escaped?" cried Herbert.

"Falconer! he is free!—liberated from a death

of ignominy, and left a few years to repent; and to atone to society for his follies and his crimes!"

"Maria!" cried Herbert, as he grasped her by the arm.

"My daughter!" said Woodville, advancing with a stately step to the middle of the apartment—"it was well done, my daughter!"

At this moment a servant entered the room, and, placing a silver bracelet in Miss Woodville's hand, informed her that it had been left by a horseman, who had immediately galloped off down the avenue towards the sea.

"Yes, the pledge! it is mine! he has not failed!" said Maria, as, clasping her hands together, she seemed to murmur a prayer of gratitude.

Herbert stood motionless. He gazed for a moment on the attitude of his mistress; his hand, which at first had been raised, he gradually dropped, until it rested where he was accustomed to grasp his sword-hilt. He appeared slowly awaking to life and animation. Maria Woodville, alarmed at this unwonted appearance, murmured some words of exculpation, and sank down at his feet. Herbert instantly stepped back, and, gazing on the sinking form of the pale girl before him, made an effort to buckle on a sword which he had snatched from the window-seat. Vain was the attempt; his feelings were too strongly agitated; it was but the effort of a moment, but it was an unsuccessful one. He then turned, as if departing;—he was about to fly, he knew not whether.

"Herbert! dear Herbert!" at length murmured

the unhappy girl, “ leave me not thus; frown not on me thus—forgive me, as heaven may pardon all. It was to save the first, and once the dearest friend that I possessed. I will see him no more! never more name him to thee! I will be thine! thine! and thine only, for ever!”

“ We are but fools! and, when we muse on happiness, wake but to find it some base delusion, or some cursed dream! Maria! Miss Woodville! heaven knows that I have loved thee with the deepest, fondest, truest of affections: my life would I have risked for thine, and deemed that I was happy in so doing—I am ruined! My honour as a man—my reputation as an officer—blasted for ever! The prisoner, in whose capture so many brave men fell!—liberated! free! thrown again upon the world to ravage, plunder, and—to kill! Liberated by the hand of a woman! a girl! a child!—liberated! free!—let loose once more upon society, with all his dark and hellish passions, unrestrained, embittered by thoughts of revenge, and rendered more terrible by the fear of that death, which he hourly anticipated!”

“ Stay for one moment, Henry Herbert!—do not yet reject my appeal!—and, when you know all—all that I have felt, and all that I can feel for thee!—all! that I would have dared for thee!—”

“ I am departing—I ask for no tears, I wish to hear no supplications. I am merciless!—I wish to hear no manifestations of passion, or of real, or mock distress. I am merciless!—I shall have enough to encounter from the scorn of the

world without, as, amid the jeers of my companions, I am told, that they have fought and bled, — but that my mistress has liberated !”

“ She is a *Cornelia* ! sir,” calmly said Woodville.

“ I war not with your grey hairs, old man ; — were I your foe, I could wish you no greater misery than your own opinions ; no bitterer curse, than the perfection of those principles, which I now see you have instilled into the mind of your daughter. Thank heaven, I have life and strength — I am armed ! I will seek him ; I will hunt him through his woods ; and take him, or die in the encounter. If I live it shall be with honour ; otherwise, let death be welcome !”

“ Were she a Roman girl, Harry Herbert, they would set up her statue in the Forum.”

“ Fool !” shouted the frantic lover ! “ but I bandy not words with thee ; the outlaw dies, had he fifty mistresses to guard his life. Give me my pistols ! Miss Woodville, seek not to detain them ; unless you wish, that when *we* meet, I may fall, and the outlaw live to repent.”

Maria threw down the pistols, which she had momentarily endeavoured to detain ; then, with all the eloquence of woman’s grief, when woman loves, she sought to extenuate her fault ; to plead for forgiveness, and to win back Herbert from his desperate purpose.

It was in vain ; — it might be, that for a moment he gazed with a relenting expression, upon the kneeling form of the pale and lovely girl ; it might be, that some fond and tender recollections found a silent entrance into his heart ; for he turned aside

his head, as if a momentary sorrow was about to conquer his resolution ; but the dark current of passion ebbed but for a while ; when with a voice, whose tones went to the heart of Maria Woodville, he thus addressed her father :—

“ Farewell, sir, as this moment may be the last in which we shall meet ; I proffer you my thanks for all the favours I have received ; favours, which I scarcely can hope to repay. But, if you hear of me no more, rather deem that I have been unfortunate than ungrateful. But your daughter, sir, your daughter ! I part for ever from her too ; yet the deepest regret I feel in so doing, is the consciousness that I leave her without a friend or adviser, a prey to the detestable principles of her parent.”

“ My father ! my dear father !” murmured Maria Woodville.

“ Farewell, sir,” replied the father ; then, evincing rather more than a wonted feeling in his voice, as he gradually raised himself to his full height, he said — “ I am old Alexander Woodville — three-score and seven ; during a long and weary life, I have witnessed many and various changes. I have entered, alike uninfluenced, the house of mourning and the house of rejoicing ; I have stood unmoved amid the battle and the storm ; and I thank heaven, it requires but little philosophy to bear the taunts of boyish indignation, or the denunciations of an individual, whose judgment is clouded by prejudice, and blinded by passion. Farewell, young man — you may, one day, need the philosophy which you despise ; one day require that calmness and mastery over feelings which weaken and debase mankind.”

Woodville then relapsed into his former position, and stood gazing, almost with a countenance of pity and benevolence, on the rash young sailor.

Herbert turned to depart; he paused for a moment, as he gazed on the sinking form of the young maiden, with an expression, in which the wildness of fierce and contending passions seemed strangely blended with some softening and tender recollections. He would have said "farewell"—but the word died upon his lips;—and he departed in silence.

CHAPTER XV.

THE retreating footsteps of Herbert had long died away, and Woodville still gazed in silence upon his daughter, as if expecting that she would address him. He looked, as he felt, proud of what his daughter had done towards the rescue of the discarded and no longer beloved Falconer. But her looks betokened other feelings than pride; she was pale, and trembled from head to foot. The passion of Herbert had not only given her an exaggerated idea of the mischief she had probably done him, but it had also awakened some very unpleasant doubts as to the propriety of her interfering at all in such a matter. To these thoughts, of themselves sufficiently painful, was added a dread, rather more than less torturing from its vagueness, that Herbert, while still frantic with passion, would meet with Falconer, and fall beneath his cooler and steadier malignity. For a time she bore these harassing thoughts in tearless silence; but looking suddenly up, and meeting her father's gaze, she sprang towards him, and burst into an agony of sobs and tears.

“ No tears, my girl ! ” said Alexander Woodville. “ Virginia wept not when her father stabbed her in the shambles ; and Leone of Athens could endure torture itself without a murmur. Go ! bring me from the library the panegyric of Lysias on the Greeks who fell at Marathon ; and in listening to its glorious pages you shall forget the love of one who is undeserving of you.”

The command fell unheeded, almost unheard, upon the ears of the daughter. However indifferent the father might be, however *he* might have steeled his heart in the school of a stern philosophy, and learned to gaze with apathy on the deepest trials of misery, and the breaking up of all the tenderest hopes, and most delicate affections, his daughter could not view the destruction of her happiness, or reflect upon the situation and feelings of Herbert, without a violence of emotion which seemed even to threaten her life. It was a strange picture to gaze on — the weeping and sinking form of the fair girl coiled round the feet of the unmoved and iron-hearted Woodville.

Maria Woodville clung round her father’s knees ; the silent tears of an agony which could not be suppressed, rolled from the dark lashes of her eyes ; she could only murmur her grief in exclamations of fear lest Herbert should encounter Falconer in the woods ; until, gaining eloquence by despair itself, she implored her father to save him — “ for her sake, if he loved her, and would not spurn her from his feet.”

The old man stood as unmoved as one of the portraits of his ancestors above him ; he seemed to have knitted up his soul, as though the present

moment were to be the most glorious test of his philosophy. Fool ! he knew not what that philosophy had yet to encounter. There was not wholly wanting an expression of dignity, not unmixed with benevolence, in his aspect, as he contemplated the scene before him. Then, after a moment's pause, he calmly asked his daughter if she meant to crave his blessing, or wherefore "knelt she at his feet ?"

This was too much even for her gentle spirit to endure. Starting up, she exclaimed, "Pray do not mock me ; I am a weak and foolish girl, and have much need of your pity. Pray do not mock me ! forgive me ; for we are now alone in the world ; forgive me if I have not profited by that philosophy which you love. O no ! no ! I was never intended to be a martyr, and you do not now sit in judgment on your daughter."

Vain was her appeal ; she knew that every moment was precious ; and that life and death were on the fleeting of a moment ; — and, roused at last by the excess of her fears, she cried, " Fly to his rescue, father ! O, hate me ! scorn me ! drive me for ever from your presence ! yet speak ! speak, I implore, as an adviser, a friend, a father, should speak. I am but young yet — foolish — and unskilful in the ways of this dark world. We are alone, my father !" she whispered, while clinging to his arm ; " no one is present to witness your kindness, or ridicule you for your emotion. Save him ! banish me for ever ; yet do not make me mad ! "

Woodville gazed into the mirror by his side, to note if his countenance betrayed aught of emotion :

— he was still triumphant. For many years he had been a widower, yet ever had he fondly cherished the memory of his wife; and her loss, and the bitter grief which he had then experienced, were among the causes which had first inspired him with his stern philosophy. Yet, though his daughter knelt at his feet, and seemed to plead with the lips, the looks, the eyes of her mother, he was still as unmoved, as inflexible as ever.

“ Go !” at length he said, “ go to your chamber, my girl ; and when you can return calm and collected, I will hear ; then shall I know that you have triumphed over the poor, miserable passions of humanity. Go ! and learn that grief itself is but the shadow of joy departed ; and happiness is but a mockery. a delusion and a lie !”

She heard and she obeyed : she struggled awhile fearfully with her passions, and strove in vain to believe that there was folly in their indulgence ; or that joy, affection, and love were unhallowed ; that there were crime and imposture in the holiness of grief. She involuntarily uttered a prayer, that if thus unheedingly she had erred, she might be forgiven ; yet she feared, her errors were more of the heart than of the head ; and when she reflected on her father’s philosophy, she apprehended that, like a converted heretic, she might yet relapse—to weep with those that weep, and to rejoice with those that rejoice. She endeavoured to ferrit out, and to banish the very thoughts of all those beautiful affections which glide into the heart, and which render the days of youthful love so delightful.

Maria Woodville, at length, proceeded to *rejoin her father* ; she now deemed that she had tri-

umphed over every passion, and that love and affection lay charmed and silent, before the controlling wand of the magic of philosophy.

But how little do we know of our own hearts ; how small a knowledge do even experience and age afford us of the power of our affections !

Maria entered the apartment from which her lover had but so recently hurried. She thought to prove to her father, that she was worthy of being the sister of the Gracchi !

At this moment, Herbert's dog rushed forward, and at the sight of her, evinced his joy by all the vociferous fondness and affection of his nature. With a feeble hand, she endeavoured to drive him from her feet, and pass him without recognition or encouragement ; but it was in vain. His appearance had awakened too many fond and tender recollections ; he seemed the only connecting link between her violated affections and the hopes still lingering at her heart ; *he* had not forgotten,—had not deserted her ; and now appeared the only being she knew, to welcome, and to love her. The dog was triumphant over the philosopher. Kneeling on the cushion beside the sofa on which her father sat, she threw her arms around Ranger's neck, and burst into tears. It was but for a few seconds that she thus indulged her grief, when, starting up to address her father, she found that she was alone.

“ My father ! ” at length she said, “ he too has left me ; I am alone ! Then no more sorrow, and a truce to tears ! I will prove myself worthy to be his daughter, and that I dare to emulate his magnanimity.” Then, after a pause, the tears of the fair disciple of Zeno fell fast and thick in spite of

all her stoicism, she exclaimed, “ Ah ! they will meet ! And *must* the brave, the noble, the devoted one, fall ; contending with a man of desperate fortunes ; influenced by every feeling of revenge which can darken his soul. Sacrificed by me ! whom he loved so fondly, so fondly confided in ! Away then ! if there is such an emotion as fear, I will at least prove myself superior to *that weakness*. I will follow *him* ; I will save *him* ; I will throw myself between their swords, if it be in the forest depth, and amid armed men.”

So saying, she darted from the room ; and in a few minutes after, the clatter of her pony’s feet was heard, as she galloped down the avenues of the path to the depths of Myrtledown forest, the direction which she had ascertained, had been taken by her lover.

With feelings strongly influenced by the beauty of the autumnal woods, the hour of night, and, more than all, the cause in which she was engaged, Maria Woodville followed, almost fearlessly, the recent tracks of a horse on the green sward.

Though her young heart was ever alive to the softest susceptibilities of human nature ; she possessed a moral intrepidity of character, which could enable her to act with courage on the greatest emergency — to encounter and rise superior to the greatest dangers.

The secret of Falconer’s escape, was as yet known but to few of his followers ; the great majority were prowling in the neighbouring woods, either plotting some desperate scheme for his rescue, or, at all events, with minds deeply embittered

and excited against those, who, as they imagined, had betrayed him. Maria Woodville was aware, that her own name was not uncoupled with suspicion, and she feared that she might be recognized by some exasperated smuggler, as the betrothed bride of one by whose exertions Falconer had been captured.

Night had now set in, and, although the moon was nearly full, she shed but a partial and imperfect light — dark and dense clouds were hurrying across the sky, and at so little elevation, that they appeared to sweep along the hills. There was an occasional gleam of lightning, which ran along the southern horizon, giving wild but not unpicturesque glimpses of the distant country ; while the wind, like an unquiet spirit, came sweeping through the forest, with a train of the red and mellow leaves of the autumn, wreathed into all manner of fantastic eddies.

Maria Woodville pursued her way ; her eye endeavouring to scrutinize the appearance of every object, while, startled at the flight of the wild bird from the brake, or the timid leveret as it crossed her forest paths, her heart beat quicker at every step. Although she had preserved Falconer's life at the risk of her own happiness, and that of one whom she loved far dearer than herself ; there was no individual she feared so much to encounter alone as the smuggler chief ; for, when she selected the rough but open-hearted sailor, as the instrument of his leader's escape, she had enjoined upon him, the propriety of concealing from the smuggler himself, the part that she had acted.

She feared, otherwise, that he might interpret her interest in his fate, as a sympathy for his crimes. Handspike was ready enough to support these views. Independently of the solemn pledge of secrecy which he had given to Miss Woodville, he had enough ambition of his own, to be exalted in the eyes of his companions; not only as the executor, but as the contriver of the plot, which again gave liberty and life, and hope of vengeance to their leader.

Hence Falconer was ignorant of the interest which Maria Woodville had evinced in his behalf, and the dark passions and bitter feelings which he entertained towards her and Herbert, were in no-wise mitigated when he found himself, sword in hand, ranging at liberty, through his accustomed haunts. The maiden still tracked upon the turf the footprints of the solitary horse.

In the dim woods, alone, and at nightfall, a feeling of terror for the first time, seemed to come over her; she appeared, as if led on by an invisible influence; as if, in the silent forest, with here and there a belt of stars glittering in the heaven above, there were a power which could not be described; and she had a feeling of awe, as though she were wandering amid the territories of some supernatural being. Suddenly, a sound fell upon her ear — she tightened her pony's rein; then, again advancing a few paces, she fancied that she heard the swell of the sullen ocean upon the beach. In another minute, she perceived that the path which she had followed, led immediately to the brink of a cliff, whence, a rocky and precipitous path, conducted to the sands beneath. She

had some difficulty in arresting the progress of her pony, when, to her astonishment, she beheld foot-marks of the horse which she had so long followed, almost at the verge of the cliff; but, after the closest observation, she could not discover a single print of returning steps.

CHAPTER XVI.

CLOSING her eyes in horror, Maria Woodville was for some moments completely stupefied by this discovery. At length, with a desperate resolution, she cast a wild and hurried glance upon the scene below; but from the projection of some rocks immediately under the cliff, she was unable to discover the object for which she sought. Hope succeeded to despair; she could not believe that Herbert had madly sacrificed his life to the impulse of grief or passion; while she knew that he was too skilful a rider to allow Marksman, who was ever a gentle and obedient animal, to precipitate their mutual destruction. Maria Woodville now gazed on the ocean which rolled far beneath her; it was every moment undergoing a variety of beautiful changes, from the glimpses of occasional moonlight, the distant flashing of the breakers, and the quick transition of dark and gloomy clouds. A streak of the blue sky, with here and there, a timid star which seemed tremblingly to come out and gaze upon the rough waves below, gave an interest to *the scene, as though night and darkness could not*

yet obscure every glimpse of the bright and holy worlds above; while there was something strangely musical in the tones of the rude wind, as it went in sullen gusts along the beach, murmuring the same old melodies, which it had learned when the world was young.

Maria Woodville now thought that she perceived a white spot in the ocean, immediately under the shadow of a dark and lowering cloud; in another moment it vanished, then again appeared, but altering its form, it wore a peculiar brightness, and glittered like a star among the waves. It was then lost. She directed her eyes far and wide over the land, and the broken outline of the shore; but she could perceive no beacon or signal, nay, not even the preventive sailor, pacing the rounds of his monotonous guard upon the beach. Again, looking on the ocean, the young maiden saw an object like a silver snake, swiftly gliding towards the beach. It had the same gentle undulations, the same appearance of unwearied speed, but the bright mist which hovered around its sides, and the glittering thread of light which it left in its track, soon convinced her that it was an object, not altogether unfamiliar to those seas.

In a few minutes, a galley, white as the foam through which she darted, grounded on the beach. She was a bark rather above the usual size, containing a rich cargo of what is generally denominated, "light goods;" with the waves running on a level with her gunwhale, and the prospect of almost certain destruction to her crew, had the storminess of the ocean increased. She had passed over with lightning-speed, from the shores of the

opposite continent. The crew who manned her, were clothed in white garments, and her appearance was at once singularly beautiful and interesting. Scarcely had she grounded, when, by some preconcerted signal which Maria had not perceived, twenty or thirty individuals were assembled on the beach. The maiden shuddered at the idea of being discovered, lest the rude and lawless band which she beheld before her should deem that she was a spy upon their actions. To retreat was now impossible; the only path by which she could effect it, being occupied by smugglers busily employed in running their goods.

Yielding to her fate, she drew her pony beneath the shelter of a stunted fir-tree, which, blown down by the wintry gales, lay with its still verdant branches along the edge of the cliff. From this spot she was enabled to overlook the proceedings of the party on the beach; but, though the sky was obscured, and there was an indistinctness shed over the persons of the smugglers, there was a being for whose form Maria Woodville sought with a deep and fearful interest. It was in vain; yet, in the occasional murmurs which reached her ears from afar, there was one person whose shrill oaths, and exclamations, were heard distinctly above the roar of the waves, and the howling of the wind. The fair listener was not long unconscious that "The Leopard," as he was called, was acting a prominent part in the scene before her.

His voice, and that of Peter and old Gull, which also were recognized by Maria, fell more frequently upon her ear than any others; and these persons

seemed to take the most active part in the illicit proceedings of the night.

The scene below was so strange, and at the same time so unexpected, that she could hardly convince herself of its reality. The low murmurs of the deep, the beautiful white galley, scarcely rocking upon the waves, her crew resting upon their oars, like so many beings of the sea, gave an air of enchantment to the scene; while the dark forms of the smugglers on the beach, flitting to and fro in the obscure moonlight, the sullen gusts of the wind, and the occasional glitter of weapons, excited an interest, which was not the less intense, from a consciousness it awakened of danger and peril to the gazer.

Had her fears not been too much roused, and her heart too sad, Maria Woodville might have found means enough, wherewith to indulge in all the romantic feelings of her nature; but she would have been doomed to be not very agreeably aroused from her reverie. An object on the beach had now attracted the attention of her pony. It was a solitary horse, harnessed in a light cart, for the purpose of carrying off some of the bulkier part of the boat's cargo. Now, though Fairy would certainly have preferred her own comfortable crib and manger, to standing exposed in the midnight air, on the bleak summit of a cliff, she possessed a few companionable qualities; and she could not thus behold a fellow-creature, condemned to obtain a livelihood in such a dishonest manner, without expressing her feelings, in a long shrill neigh of condolence. The effect was magical; not *more instantaneously* does the muttering of a holly

name disperse a whole troop of Mr. Crofton Croker's fairy revellers, than the ominous neigh dispersed the assemblage on the beach. In the moment of panic, the smugglers conceived the cliffs to be circled by a troop of horse, prepared to cut off their retreat, or to charge them, sword in hand, by the only way which led to the beach. Scarcely less swift than arrow from a bow, the galley shot through the waves, and vanished, in a few seconds, in the white foam of the sea. But it was not long before some of the more stout-hearted of the smugglers, who had not fled away outright, began to recover their spirits, and return to the scene of action. As they perceived no immediate danger, they were curious to ascertain the cause of their former alarm. Maria Woodville now regretted that she had not taken advantage of their momentary dispersion to escape. She already heard their muttered threats and imprecations, as they climbed up the cliff from the beach. In the next moment, she was aware of more than a dozen individuals approaching the spot, still occupied, making good their ascent of the cliff by pieces of projecting rock, and the roots and branches of the stunted bushes which clung to its sides. Nor was she long in recognizing the voices of Falconer's three terrible companions, as rapidly ascending towards the ledge on which she stood, they enlivened the labour of their escalade, by the following conversation.

“ Hang me, Peter, if I don't think that shriek was from the ghost of Tom Leopard's pony ; he was bred somewhere hereabouts, before Old Joey the fisherman stole him, and starved him to death *on the hills of Bishopstone !*”

“ Like enow, old Gull,” said one of his companions—“ like enow; only I don’t think ponies neigh after they are dead; and that the animal you mention had never strength enough in all his life, to come it so strong—barring once, when Old Joey toppled over the cliff, and broke his leg, and we bound it up with a hay-band; and the brute got, as it were, an inkling of it; and, with his neighing and blowing, nigh enough killed us with laughter, and almost frightened Old Joey to death, lest he should eat him up, leg and all, for the sake of the hay-band.”

“ Ya ! hoo ! I say, who’s the fool now, fellow,” screamed the Leopard, in his shrillest tone, not at all relishing these allusions to his former charger. “ I say who’s fool, now, fellow ? ‘Tis some trooper aloft, set as spy over us—Loo ! loo ! boys ! look to the back-way there, show him the road over his horse’s quarters, with a blow from a cutlass, or a plunge over the ears, by snapping a pistol close enough to make him wink,—swear to it !”

“ We have no fire-arms, and nothing but a pitchfork between two of us !” shouted voices in the rear.

“ A pitchfork with one prong !” roared out another smuggler; “ but I’ve got a blunderbuss at home.”

“ Fool !” shouted old Peter; “ a goose under the arm, as the proverb says, is better than two tomtits in an ivy-bush !”

“ A gun ! a gun !” shouted two men, who that instant had picked up one of the weapons which the smugglers had dropped in their flight—“ a gun ! but ho ! with the lock off !”

“ Fool ! again,” cried the man of proverbs ; “ keep to the pitchfork — a living dog is better than a dead lion !”

“ Who’s fool now ?” shouted the Leopard — “ I’ve something here that can bark a little — Joey’s old pistol — swear to it — I’ll put a couple more bullets into the old creature for a treat, though it’s not quite fair, for she’s as brown as Sally Mitchel the gipsey, and as rusty as the devil’s lamp-irons !”

“ Take care you don’t slip off there, and break your neck, Tom Leopard ! for though you are born to be hanged, clearly enough, no saying how soon an accident may happen !”

“ Yo ! hoa ! I shan’t die in my shoes till your bones rattle ! — who’s fool now ?”

“ You are — hang me !” growled old Gull ; “ put your boat on t’other tack, I say ! get your pistol in trim, and bear her muzzle towards yonder hole in the rock.”

“ Hang me !” growled out old Gull again ; “ get your pistol in trim, I say, and bear her muzzle lower ; hang me ! if I think the salt water has quite run out of her yet ; don’t load again, Leopard !”

“ Do her good, I say — do her good — rub her rust off — look a-head ! a devilish good pistol — wants two hands at her though, ’cause why, kicks like a donkey ; — now for it — lay hold there Peter ! — do her good, do us all good, rub the rust off ! — something white there — present !”

Rusty or not, Maria Woodville felt no inclination to brave the fire of this formidable weapon ; and, although the pitchfork of the valiant party

advancing in the rear offered no pleasing anticipations, she deemed it a less dangerous alternative than the artillery of Tom Leopard. Turning Fairy quickly round, and putting her to her speed in spite of the declivity and roughness of the way she made an attempt to escape the band of marauders. Nor was it unsuccessful ; the unexpected appearance, at that hour, in that place, of a young maiden on a white pony, paralised all attempts at hostility on the part of the knights of the pitch-fork. Half a dozen countrymen, well armed, were at this moment just returning from their hiding-places, and coming forward, agreeably to the command of the Leopard, to make good the defence of the rear, but they were astonished ; and, opening their ranks, allowed the apparition to glide by, without an attempt at arresting its progress. One fellow, as soon as Maria was out of sight, fired his fowling-piece in the direction of her flight, perhaps to satisfy his own conscience on the score of courage, and ward off the storm of imprecations with which the Leopard and his companions were preparing to greet their associates of the rear-guard.

The oaths and shouts of the smugglers became every moment less audible ; and finally, as they died away, Maria Woodville found herself again in the depths of the silent forest, with not a sound to disturb the stillness of the scene but the whizzing of the wild bird's wings, as, startled, it sprung from the copsewood.

Having allowed Fairy to rest even longer than was prudent, Maria again urged to the utmost the speed of the exhausted pony ; for she thought

that she heard, in the distance, the clatter of horses' hoofs.

It was no delusion ; she found that she was pursued : yet the pursuer appeared in no immediate hurry to overtake her, as he still kept at the same distance as when she had first perceived him. Deeply did she regret the unhappy cause which had led her forth into the woods on her too perilous enterprise. Every exertion was employed, that she might distance her mysterious pursuer. But threats and entreaties were alike bestowed in vain upon Fairy. The pony had become either completely tired, or thoroughly disgusted with the proceedings of the evening ; and as her infirmities increased, the natural obstinacy of her tribe (for she was of Shetland, and Celtic ancestry,) became every moment more apparent ; and at length she absolutely refused to proceed beyond a slow, rambling sort of a trot, about as fast as her ordinary walk.

The stranger, profiting by this event, was in a few minutes at Miss Woodville's side. The maiden turned timidly round to gaze on the intruder ; but from the large slouched hat that shaded his temples, and the ample riding cloak which concealed his person, she was unable to form any correct surmise as to his identity. He was mounted on a dark horse, whose gigantic height and strength of limb seemed well calculated to bear a rider of far more herculean proportions.

" You ride late," said the stranger, touching his hat with a mock obeisance, and drawing his horse still nearer to the pony's bridle. " It must have been an all-important and interesting occasion that

could have tempted Miss Woodville, thus unattended, to leave the hospitality of Woodlands, the philosophical essays of its possessor, and his erudite expositions of classic heroism, for a ramble amid the haunt of smugglers, and a pilgrimage to the sea!"

To such an interrogation the maiden knew not how to reply; in her fears she scarcely understood the insinuation, or the malice and scorn in which it was expressed. She once more endeavoured to quicken Fairy's pace, but in vain; when, as she was about to say a few words in reply, the stranger, approaching still nearer, actually leant over her pony's shoulder, and again addressed her. Commencing in a whisper, he gradually raised his voice as he proceeded—"So they have taken him! bound him! chained him!—aye, girl! cast those blue eyes on the ground, and feign to weep; the halter is all but around his neck! his name handed over to infamy! his crimes hereafter chronicled in the deathless pages of some Old Bailey calendar! while his wrongs are to be for ever unrequited! his sufferings for ever unavenged!"

"I must know, sir," said Maria Woodville, "in whose presence I am; to whom I am to reply; where my interrogator lives; whither he is bound?"

"What name! where I live! whither I go!—that were a secret worth knowing; it would give dull hopes, and feeble joy, to those who dare pursue me! But I am armed! I am armed!" and he struck his hand fiercely against the pistols in his belt. "Cowards! singly I could make skip a dozen of the whelps! but they hunt in packs—and the tiger falls! Stay! I have yet more to say to Miss Wood-

ville; I must know on what errand she has wandered forth this evening; what reasons she can have for indulging in a midnight adventure, a clandestine ramble!"

"And I, sir, must know on what authority you claim my confidence; on what warrant you can demand my reasons?"

"On what authority, girl!" fiercely retorted the stranger—"on the authority of power! I am one who has ever been accustomed to carry my commission in my scabbard, and my warrant in my belt. Nay, pardon me—I would not send the mantling blood so quickly to thy cheek, which but now was paler than I have ever marked it;—nay, I mean,"—and he softened his voice—"when I was once allowed to peruse the very language of those eyes. You cannot get away!—ha! you cannot get away! May I ask if Miss Woodville was again stealing forth upon the meeting of smugglers, to betray them to punishment and death?"

"Those who are better acquainted with me than yourself," said Maria, almost shedding tears, "know that I am incapable of such conduct. O no! no! but I pray you, if you be generous and noble, let me go home to my father and my friends; *he*—*they* I mean, will wonder at my absence—ere this will seek for me; and if they find you—armed—by my side, you have much indeed to fear!"

"Talk not to me of fear; appeal no more to my generosity; or to feelings which fools are wont to designate, as the nobler emotions of the heart. I have put them off for ever; and in their place I have braced a sword by my side, and mounted *pistols* in my belt! I have been banned and out-

lawed ! I have worn fetters, and suffered deaths by anticipation ! I have seen my party scattered to the winds—the best and bravest of my band mowed down by the sword — *they* may look to it ! *they* may look to it ! Till that hour, I never shed human blood ! I wished to pass through life without pulling a murder on my head ! I wished in mine old age, to have some recollections on which to found my penitence and my prayers ! But I knew it would be vain—I had some foreboding that it would come to this—I knew that it was a delusion, a false, base, hope—and that they would not cease persecuting, until they had destroyed me !”

There appeared to be much, almost of madness in the wildness, and fierceness of his expression, and the withering force of his scorn ; when again turning towards the terrified girl, he thus continued: “ Maria Woodville ! amid blighted hopes and conquered passions, I would have wished to have cast thine image from my heart : I have prayed to heaven that I might forget thee ; I have wrestled with the fury of my passions, and thought more than once that I had forgiven thee ! but as easily might I have forgotten that I have stood on my father’s grave, an object of scorn to the world around ; as easily have forgotten, that I have worn the fetters of mine enemy.”

Deeply impassioned was the language in which he spoke, and there was in it an earnestness which startled and appalled the heart of Maria Woodville. Long ere this, had she recognized her companion. From the threats he once had uttered ; from the sad change a few months had effected in his character and his hopes ; she knew that she had every

thing to apprehend from his present mood, and her own forsaken and solitary situation. At length, more influenced by her fears, than her inclinations, she expressed her hopes, that he might yet remain in his native land; that his prospects might brighten; and that, hereafter, he might find a companion—one, more worthy than herself, who might return his affection with constancy and warmth. As she spoke, she marked a tear glistening in the dark eyes of her companion; but he dashed it away, as if indignant that it had betrayed some lurking feelings yet alive to the softer emotions of human nature. Then in a voice, which even seemed to falter as he gazed on the fair girl by his side; he resumed; “There was one, who once loved and adored you, Miss Woodville! whose eyes were for ever haunted by your image, whose ears were ever filled with the tones of your voice. *His* was not the fashionable love of a military minion, or a naval sentimentalist, but that of a high and devoted passion, which, in a proud and daring spirit, amounts to an adoration—a religion. But *he* was spurned and cast off! aye, *spurned!* because he had none of the courtly antics of a frivolous rival. It may be feebly drawn—words! words! *they* cannot *express* all that the heart can *feel!* But, Maria Woodville! do you not know the picture now!” and Falconer, as he spoke, dropped his cloak over his shoulders.

“I know the portrait well,” she replied, after a moment’s pause; “but the colouring is false. Even had I failed sir, to recognize your form—your language, your sentiments, would have unmasked you,

whatever disguise your noble and daring spirit deemed it fit to assume."

" It is well said, for the daughter of Alexander Woodville," replied Falconer; " so then, you know me—the spurned—the degraded—the man, who was to die the death of ignominy—who was bound like a felon—I have the fetters.—Nay, stir not! move not! we must parley here, false and fickle girl! what if I take forcibly the hand you once promised to bestow on me? what if I cheat the fond anticipations of a hated rival?" So saying, he again laid his hand on the rein of Maria's pony.

The trembling girl appealed to his generosity—to his mercy; then, as a last resource, she threatened him with the dangers which he incurred, the perils which he ran.

" Art thou not alone, and in my power, Maria Woodville? alone! without a protector, in the woods!—ha!—in the shady woods! thy father studying in his garret the history of the chaste Lucretia; thy lover far away! Art thou not in my power, among my people? Where wilt thou find a defender?"

" In my God! in thy conscience, too!" firmly, but faintly, she replied: " in mine innocence!"

" Ha!" said Falconer, with a smothered laugh, some of the old poetry still flitting in your brain, my love! a sort of prose translation of the distich about the lion—

" That will turn, and flee
From a maid in the pride of her purity."

But, look on me, I am no such noble animal; I am no lion; I have been wronged! hunted well

nigh to death ! have too many injuries to redress, to play the Scipio !—Home ! home, to my heart, Maria !—or else, home, home to my den ! henceforth I am no lion, but a wolf !”

“ At bay then !” cried Herbert, springing from the path behind them, “ at bay then !”—and he fired his pistol full at the person of the smuggler. Falconer reeled on his horse, and the animal leaped forward ; the bullion from the tassel of his cloak flew into a thousand pieces ; but it was only the momentary surprise which had intimidated the outlaw ; as the smoke cleared away, he appeared as erect on his horse as ever.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ ‘TWAS well intended, most valiant commander of trained hirelings,” exclaimed Falconer, after a brief pause, “ but if a simple man like myself may say so much, there was no superfluous courage, to say nothing about courtesy, in the proceeding.”

Backing his horse a few paces, his brow darkening and lowering the while, with an expression of demoniac malice, he resumed, “ It is my turn next!” So saying, he covered the person of Herbert with his pistol; a weapon of which he was so perfect a master, that he was rarely known to miss his aim. Suddenly he returned his pistol to his belt, and, turning towards Miss Woodville, exclaimed —

“ No! he shall not die thus! — It shall be no assassination! though the treachery of his deeds is worthy of it! — I feared him not at the head of his band — I feared him not with one foot on the gunwhale of his armed cruizer! — he dies! but in killing him, I will at least have the satisfaction of saying, that I did so upon equal terms.”

So speaking, he dismounted; and, unsheathing his sword, placed himself an attitude of defiance.

His opponent's weapon was in an instant across his own. They fought with the seeming determination that this should be the last earthly struggle in which one of them should be engaged. Yet, though excited by the fiercest wrongs, real or imaginary, and at this moment, roused equally to fury, it was soon evident that one of the combatants possessed superior advantages to his opponent.

Herbert could not but feel that a second time he owed his life to the generosity of his rival. Much, too, of his usual coolness and confidence had forsaken him when he failed in his attempt to rescue his mistress from the power of the smuggler; and, though his cheek blanched not, nor his courage faltered, he fought like one without hope of a successful issue to the contest. Falconer, on the other hand, was all energy and spirit; under the excitement of the moment, his figure seemed to increase in height, and his dark eyes glow with more than wonted fire.

The spot where they fought, was wild and unfrequented, in the very depths of the forest, and rarely visited by man. A few lofty firs, rising at intervals above the underwood, like the giant arbiters of the combat, seemed to scowl gloomily upon the scene. And Maria Woodville! — she was the only spectator! The unfortunate girl gazed on the scene with that expression of wild and unavailing sorrow; that extreme of grief and over-excitement of feeling, which borders upon apathy and unconsciousness: — she was but a few paces off — one hand grasped convulsively her pony's mane, while the

other was firmly extended, as though she would beckon her lover away from the combat. Still there appeared a lingering consciousness; for, when Herbert gained an advantage from Falconer's foot slipping on the turf, a small spot of deepest colour, glowed for a moment on her cheek, as though hope had lighted up her beacon in her heart. But it was gone almost as soon as kindled. Falconer, by an unexpected movement, struck the point of his adversary's sword to the ground; then, without ending the contest, with the malice of an Iago, he contented himself with wounding him in the arm. Herbert felt his strength to be failing; yet, not wishing to die piecemeal by the hand of so skilful an executioner, made a desperate effort to close with his opponent. The smuggler, prepared for this manœuvre, parried his adversary's sword to the very hilt, then hurled him upon the ground at his feet. One moment he stood over his fallen foe, as though he wished to wring from his despair a cry for mercy; the next, passing his sword through his body and raising his hands above his head, he half uttered a shout of exultation; then, clanging the reeking weapon into its scabbard, he leaped on his horse, and, like a guilty spirit, vanished from the spot.

Maria Woodville gazed, apparently unmoved, upon the scene; not a murmur escaped her lips; and it seemed as if the hand of enchantment had passed over her frame, and changed it into marble. Her lover lay extended on the turf—his deathlike brow becoming still more pale, beneath the unclouded sky. His cap was thrown some distance from him, his sword was clenched in his hand,

and, as the wind momentarily swept by, it waved his dark hair over his forehead. Maria Woodville was gazing with the same wild intensity, but there was a slight movement in her extended arm, which was slowly descending to her side. Herbert still breathed — he had fainted from loss of blood, but now, as he slowly revived, he raised himself upon his arm, and feebly uttered the name of the only being near him. Oh, what a voice was that, to unspell the chained emotions of her heart !

Her first impulse was to bind up his wound, to staunch the flowing blood ; the next, to rapidly reload, from his cartouch-box, the pistol which lay at his side ; thus deeming that she might not be without means of defence should Falconer return to repeat his blow, to mock the agonies of his rival, or to claim her as his victim.

Herbert feared that he could not live ; he cared little for his own sake now, but he could not endure the thought of dying, with Maria Woodville by his side, alone and undefended ! Every instant he expected to hear the sound of Falconer's horse — but every entreaty that he addressed to Maria to leave him to his fate, and seek her own safety, was answered by a wild and hurried expression, as pointing to the pistol, she said. "It is loaded ! it is loaded ! I have it firmly in my hand !"

It was not long before, from mental as well as bodily agony, the young commander of the Greyhound became again insensible. The maiden still kept by his side, her fixed and glassy gaze addressed to the only opening among the trees, one hand knitted in the fond grasp of her lover's, while with *the other*, she touched instinctively the lock of the

pistol, when the wind murmured louder than usual. A smile played upon her lips; but it was not the smile of mirth; her hair had parted from its bands, and rolled down a neck and bosom, now exposed to every gust of wind; she spoke not; seemed scarcely to breathe; but with all that was dear and holy to her in this world by her side, she sat like an Indian girl, fiercely awaiting the approach of the exterminators of her tribe. Then, as the hour advanced, even this feeling seemed to change. Her gaze became fixed on the heavens above her, and she grew each moment less conscious of her situation—visions, confused, and indistinct, floated in her brain; voices rang upon her ears; and the stars appeared to gaze on her like spirits.

The voices that she heard, the murmurs that fell upon her ear, were no delusion. An old man stood by her side, and as he waved his torch to and fro, the ruddy light gleamed on the features of the pale girl and her wounded lover. Alexander Woodville starting back, for he recognized his child—in the moment of surprise, uttered a cry of joy, and for once! for once! he clasped her to his heart. But he checked this feeling of emotion, ere it was scarcely formed, and calmly inquiring of her, how she came there; he wended his bugle horn, as a signal to those of his domestics who were scattered through the woods, on a similar search. Maria Woodville knew not her father; she raised the pistol to his breast, but it fell from her grasp ere she had touched the trigger; she fainted; then, as she revived in the arms of her attendants, she was conscious that she was saved,

and that Herbert, still alive, was about to be borne to Woodlands. Woodville loved his daughter; but when she fled from her home, he sought not to pursue her, lest he might betray himself, or his philosophy, by some emotion. But when her pony returned alone to the mansion, he summoned his household, and, mounting old Mowbray, much to his satisfaction, upon an ancient carriage horse, accoutred with the bridle and trappings of some Sir Hugh or Sir Willoughby, he set forth on his progress, to discover the fate of his only child; —Fairy, being led in the rear like a delinquent, under the absurd hope that she might be of some service in the search. If the father entertained any fears, if there were any kindly passions stirring at his heart, they were unrecorded to mankind—no sign of the eyes, no faltering of the voice, betrayed them to the world. He heard too, as his daughter revived, her simple but fearful narrative of events, without any outward expression of resentment, or pity.

As soon as Herbert arrived at Woodlands, the surgeon, on examination of his wound, pronounced, that, though dangerous, it was not necessarily mortal. The hopes he thus excited, were in a few days realized by the rapid improvement of his patient; and although the worthy doctor prided himself much upon the success of this case, it was supposed by many persons, that the watchful care, the gentle and affectionate attentions of a certain youthful nurse, who would enter her patient's chamber with the step of a fairy, and watch over his slumber with the guardianship of an angel; *availed more in the restoration of his health, than*

all the regimen and specifics of the worthy disciple of Galen. Herbert was also a convert to this opinion, and declared, that though the blue eyes of his nurse disturbed his meditations, and her injunctions to slumber were not always followed by sleep, yet the hopes which she expressed, and the sweet tones of that devotion which offered up prayers for his safety, revived his confidence, supported him through moments of torture, and gave him the promise of ultimate recovery. But there was also another circumstance, which to his proud spirit, had a still greater influence; the assurance from the commander of the district, that his conduct had met with approbation, and that in the escape of his prisoner, his misfortune had not been attributed to any dereliction of duty. At the same time, a printed paper was forwarded to Herbert from his station, offering so high a reward for the apprehension of the smuggler, as left the fugitive but little hope of escape.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE morn was already breaking, when Alexander Woodville stood by the form of his almost unconscious child in the woods of Myrtledown. The last star had not set, when, like a death-boding spirit, flitting through the retiring shades of night, Falconer galloped among an assembly of the smugglers. It consisted of the party that had been employed in running off the cargo of the "White Lady," for so the beautiful galley, which Maria Woodville saw upon the beach, was named. A cheer of joy welcomed the leader, as he rode into the midst. Wild was the triumph displayed in his countenance and his gesture, and his horse was covered with foam from the fury with which he had been urged along.

"Comrades ! *he* is no more ! my sword is stained with his blood ! he lives not to meditate fresh schemes of triumph and destruction ! Ye are free ! and I am your avenger !"

Loud was the cheer which followed this address. Falconer's three faithful comrades, Peter, Old Gull, and The Leopard, were immediately at his side, and among the most clamorous of his applauders.

These were the men whom the smuggler appeared to sway with a species of fascination ; while his knowledge of their intrepidity, and their recklessness of all danger, had, in some degree, rendered them the confidants of his designs.

Of the party assembled at the place of meeting, though most of them had heard of Falconer's escape, in the highly magnified narration of Tom Handspike, few were acquainted with the particulars, and they now crowded round their chief to press upon him a thousand questions ; and shrieks of exultation burst from them as they heard from his lips a description of his combat with Herbert.

“Enough of this,” at length exclaimed Falconer, impatiently ; “we have yet more to do, and many a fierce blow to strike ere all be safe ; for though our bitterest foe is no more — though that hand, ever armed against our safety and our lives, shall never be upraised again in triumph or command — though he is dead —”

“It is false !” cried a well-known voice, “thine was a feeble stroke ! — he lives ! — make way there !” All shrank back before the supposed apparition. The Prophet of the Bell, his countenance haggard, his whole appearance that of a maniac, stalked into the midst of the astonished smugglers. He held in one hand a torch, and displayed, by its flame, his right arm, scorched and withered as it had been in the fire of his dwelling. “Are ye cowed, and scattered, and trembling ‘robbers of the land, and pirates of the sea ?’ Ye should have the hearts of lions, and the fangs of wolves, for deeds which ye would dare ! O !

ye can fight ! but if an old man come among ye, as a witness from the dead, ye huddle together like sheep ! I say he lives to pursue ye !—he lives to destroy ye !”

“ It is false !” cried Falconer ; “ away fool !—I left him dead or dying !”

“ Dead !—do not even the dead rise ? dying !—can the dying never take vengeance ? But who art thou to talk of dying ?—thy days are numbered—thy star has become dim ! I saw him—he was pale—aye, bandit ! paler than the fair girl who clasped his hand, and who scared thee away by a look when thou hadst beaten her lover to the ground. He was pale—but his lips moved, and he spoke ! and of *thee* ! Mark Falconer ! at *thy name*, twenty swords flashed from their scabbard ! and the edge of the steel shall pursue thee !”

“ Fly ! captain, fly !” cried Handspike, who, at this moment, joined his comrades. “ There is such a storm arising, that we shall not have a plank left to escape on ! To be plain, my lads, we must cut eable and run for it, ere we have a broad-side upon our weather-ports.”

“ Hang me, the fellow’s mad !” growled out Old Gull ; while the inquiring glances of the smugglers were fixed anxiously on the countenance of Handspike.

“ He lives ! I mean Herbert lives ! the whole country is aroused ! the red-coats are upon us from Flaxsted !”

Falconer spoke not ; the next few minutes seemed to be those of irresolution ; twice he half-un-sheathed his sword ; twice he clanged it furiously *into the scabbard*. He leaped from his horse, and

gazed fiercely upon his comrades ; he mounted again ; no one spoke — it was a moment of awful silence, in which the very falling of a leaf might have been heard. At length, in a voice no louder than a whisper, he said —

“ Herbert alive ! — Can a most accursed destiny cheat me of my victim, and my vengeance ! Fool that I am ! had I stabbed a thousand times, he would not die ; and yet, life ! life ! — I have seen it pass away at a whisper, and faint at the baring of steel. Why, the dove, the lamb, can slay ; — but I ! — I cannot kill ! ”

Waving his torch above his head, Michael Stonnar advanced upon the smuggler ; but Falconer snatched a pistol from his belt, and the old man recoiled in his career ; then muttering for a moment some cabalistic incantation, in an elevated voice, and with a fierce and fanatic gesture, he exclaimed,

“ I defy thee, son of perdition ! though but a brand snatched from the burning, and steeped to the very lips in sin and sorrow, — like the son of Manaoh, I defy thee, and thy bonds, and thy chariots, and thy lances. There is a mighty One above, who shall turn aside the swords of thy armed men, and wither thy strength as flax, in the furnace of his ire ; yet ye shall live — ye shall not fall by pestilence, by famine, or by the sword. And ye, too ! the base companions of his revelry, the creatures of his crimes ! would ye have a sign and a wonder ? Shall I smite your man of blood in the forehead, as Joel did Sitera ? or hang him up by the hair of his head, like Absalom, in the sight of the captains of thousands ! Yet shall he live ; — but, as the walls of Jericho fell down before the

blast of a trumpet, so shall fall your refuge, your safety, and your sanctuary ; the smoke thereof shall ascend unto heaven, ‘ and it shall be a hissing, and a curse unto the nations ! ’ Ye have played with a serpent ! that serpent has destroyed you ! ye have sported with fire ! its ministers shall pursue you !—Away ! ye are dispersed —away ! ye are abandoned for ever ! ” Speaking thus, he hurled his flaming torch full upon the thatch of the shed, around which the smugglers had assembled. In another moment, the fabric was a pyramid of fire. Such was either the fascination of his words, or the awe and fear excited by his denunciations, that none dared to oppose his purpose ; with horror they gazed on the work of devastation ; and the Prophet, darting into the woods, escaped their power and their vengeance. All attempts to extinguish the fire were in vain ; it now blazed fiercely and wildly, throwing its ruddy light over the distant recesses of the forest, and illuminating the country for miles around. The smugglers gazed mutely on the scene of devastation ; while the rudeness of their costume, the occasional glitter of their arms, the fierce and vindictive expressions of their countenances, seemed, as the sparks of light fell among them, and they paced to and fro, in the red glare of the burning structure, to render them more like an assemblage of demons, in the recesses of some German forest, than a meeting of ordinary men.

“ It were too sure a beacon for our foes,” at length said Falconer, slowly, as he shaded his eyes from the intolerable glare of the burning building ; “ it will light them on, swiftly, to our destruction : —*then away !* we may meet again in happier times ;

the whole country is aroused and armed against us ; — but, thank heaven ! the ocean yet is free ! England has other forests and wilds, in which we may meet in security ! Ye who have the feelings of fathers and husbands, disperse to your homes, if ye have any — if not, away ! to your dens, or your hiding-places ! ” Then, pausing for a moment, he continued, with unaltered voice — “ This night I cross the sea — but to return, ere another moon, with a rich cargo, and a brave and gallant ship. Are there any here, upon whose affections I have a hold — in whose hearts I have ever inspired confidence or courage ? — Now let them stand forth, and follow ! ”

Among the lowest of the peasantry there is a sort of hereditary attachment to their country, and a profound contempt for foreigners and their customs — a wild and wandering delight in their own fastnesses and hiding-places. Many of Falconer’s men, however ready they might be to support his designs upon British ground, had homes and families — from which they could not tear themselves away without reluctance.

A few hesitated for a moment ; one or two looked wistfully towards the sea ; then menacingly clenched their hands, as they scowled beneath the glare of the burning shed ; but, when the smuggler stepped forth from the circle, and waved his hand, not without emotion, as a farewell signal to his comrades — his three associates, Peter, Old Gull, and the Leopard, were his only followers !

As the distant shouts of pursuers sounded hotly on his ear, Falconer beheld the gradual dispersion of his band : — the time, he knew, was gone by for

ever when he could reign with the same power as formerly, in the vicinity of these woods; and yet he hardly regretted the change; free to seek his fortunes in whatever clime he pleased, in his daring mind already had he formed a scheme which was to gratify every hope of ambition, every feeling of revenge.

A few days previously he had received an application from the noted smuggling agents Van Holme and Co., at Bruges, to take the command of a large vessel, which they were fitting out with a rich and valuable cargo, for the British contraband trade. He now communicated this offer to his followers; when The Leopard, who fell at once into the practicability of the scheme, recommended him to land the cargo on his own account; to seize the vessel, and taking up the profession known among the Americans by that of "Rover;" to cut the throats of all mariners on the high seas who refused to pay tribute to his flag: thus becoming a sort of privateer without letters of marque; the said Thomas Leopard engaging to communicate with some of his old friends in aid of the project. As this advice, however, was conveyed after the gentle fashion of a hint, Falconer appeared at the time to pay no attention to it; not so much, probably, from any moral compunction, as from an opinion that it was prudent to obtain old Van Holme's vessel, before he proceeded to appropriate her in accordance with the wishes of his followers.

As Falconer proceeded towards the beach with his three ministers of war, he could not help wondering at the absence of his former colleague, Hugh *Campbell*, and his suspicions were not a little ex-

cited; when The Leopard, with his usual veracity, swore that Campbell had made known their place of meeting to the Prophet; and, moreover, had fled to the Continent, to escape the vengeance and reproaches of his betrayed and devoted comrades.

A boat, belonging — it mattered not to whom — was found opportunely on the beach. To launch her was the act of a moment; and the smugglers, favoured by the obscurity of a morning fog, which hovered on the shore, put to sea without being discovered. They had not rowed far before they came in contact with a half-decked pleasure-boat, which, belonging to the officer of the station, had been moored scarcely a furlong from the shore. Boarding this vessel in a like uncere-monious way, they cast off the boat, and cutting their prize adrift, hoisted sail, and jamming the helm hard a-weather, were in a few moments speed-ing their course towards the opposite coast.

Beating about at sea for four-and-twenty hours, they at last succeeded in making land on the coast of Flanders, about half a league to the west of Ostend. Hence Falconer, having appointed the place of rendezvous for his companions, departed on his journey towards Holland, leaving Peter, Old Gull, and The Leopard, to make the best of their way toward a small seaport town, on the borders of France, near the little harbour of which the ves-sel of the smuggling firm, Van Holme and Co., lay awaiting the orders of her owners. Upon Falconer naming the place of rendezvous to his companions, it appeared to give particular satisfaction, espe-cially to The Leopard, who said that there he had first become acquainted with a right jolly fellow,

the landlord of a little inn called the “*Soldat Cultivateur*,” who could produce the captain of the “*White Lady*,” in the twinkling of an eye; that through such agency, he might hold any communication that he pleased with their comrades on the Kentish coast.

With a pathetic appeal to their judgment and discretion, as men and gentlemen, to keep themselves soberly and orderly, Falconer left his comrades to pursue their journey, and departed the same evening of his arrival, for Bruges.

Proceeding with the utmost expedition, and not meeting with any adventure worthy of notice, he speedily arrived at the native town of the rich smuggling agents, Van Holme and Co.

Every one at Bruges knew Van Holme; Falconer had, therefore, but little difficulty in discovering the residence of the rich old Burgomaster. Near the side of the canal he was directed to a large and rather low-built house, which, at a distance, had the appearance of an ornamental granary. It was an extensive pile of building, erected after the style of all the known orders of architecture in the world excepting the classic. The whole were blended together in most harmonious confusion. The windows were more regular — Falconer was unable to detect, in the front row, more than four varieties; although he could not help regretting, that the beauty of their outlines was often broken by the projection of sundry cranes and other machinery generally used in the warehouses of merchants. The worthy burgher delighted to have his worldly goods under the same protecting roof, as his household gods. Signs of this were every where appa-

rent: huge bales and various stores were to be detected piled up against the windows, effectually excluding what little light might occasionally come astray through the painted glass. "But who," as the worthy Fleming would at times remark, "who would not prefer the perfume of a bale of cinnamon, to the glare of the noontide sun, or, regret that they could not see the stars at midnight, when they knew that they were blocked out by a chest or two of spices, each worth six hundred rix dollars."

Yet with all these signs of peace and commerce, the apparitions of some half-a-dozen large and ferociously lean dogs, chained at equal distances along the front of the mansion, and a curious assortment of culverins, swivels, and field-pieces, reminded the observer, that old Van Holme was not so enervated by the soft luxuries of peace, as to have neglected all thought of defence.

To complete the picture, from an immense staff floated the standard of Holland, surmounted by a tin figure of a Dutchman resting on a barrel, and pointing to the quarter of the heavens from whence the wind blew.

Falconer looked around him to observe if there were any perceptible signs of mercantile pursuits or active employment; but the only persons to be seen were a few lethargic Flemish sailors, walking in their sleep along the quay, their time equally employed in gaping unconsciously at the smuggler, or throwing off immense volumes of smoke, from their short-hasted pipes.

There were three or four well-freighted ketches in the canal; their pennons flagging lazily in the

wind, while, occasionally, a boat might be seen passing to and fro, but so noiselessly did it glide over the tawny-looking water, that it would have awakened no feeling to mar the delusion, had Falconer thought, that he had fallen into a land of enchantment, or stumbled upon the Castle of Indolence itself; for, as yet, the six lean dogs along the front of the mansion, basked in the sun, and gave no audible proof of their existence. Opening at length, a small wooden gate, the smuggler entered what might properly be called a roofed alley. It was about twenty paces in length, and at the further end, a small door was so constructed that not more than one person might enter at a time. At the upper end of the porch was a sort of menagerie, in which parrots, kittens and monkeys, appeared classed together without regard to their habits and inclinations. An immense iron knocker, curiously wrought, and nearly as large as the door itself, completed the details of this odd scene. Falconer, impatient about the object of his journey, raised with considerable difficulty this massive instrument of annunciation; and, although he did not expect to see a giant in the porter, he could not help anticipating, with some interest, the appearance of the first living being, connected with the mansion, Van Holme, and his knocker.

At length the massive instrument descended — loud was the echo — the whole of the menagerie burst at once into a hundred unknown tongues, while the six large watch-dogs outside chimed in in dreadful chorus.

Falconer was meditating a retreat, when the door *slowly* opened, and a little dapper man, with a face

as white as a Dutch cheese, and a pair of buckles on his shoes as large as cheese plates, in a cracked and strained voice, politely enquired of him, what it was he wanted. The smuggler, bluntly stating his comission, and the purpose for which he had arrived at Bruges, requested the favour of an immediate audience of Van Holme. The little man shook his head and assumed a most dubious look. Falconer, fearful that delay might endanger his project, slipped his only remaining piece of gold into the covetous hands of the porter. Apparently, with some feeling of shame or compunction, the little man transferred it immediately from his hand into his waistcoat-pocket ; then, turning away his uncomely visage, he whistled a few wild notes ; then pausing, endeavoured with an embarrassed laugh, to joke off the failure of his musical attempt. At length, tapping the smuggler knowingly on the shoulder, in a sort of confidential whisper, he exclaimed —

“ I am not to be bought, young man, like a base English churl, or bribed like a ticket porter ; the head clerk of Mynheer Van Holme is above such paltry considerations ; but I accept your gold, to convince you how deeply I despise you for offering it ; or for doubting one moment the incorruptibility, and unimpeachable integrity of Jan Lalenson.”

Falconer endeavoured to explain away, as well as he could, the unfavourable light in which the incorruptible Jan Lalenson had viewed his conduct, representing that he unfortunately had mistaken him for the porter of the establishment.

“ Your excuse, sir,” was the reply, “ can hardly serve you, since it involves a confession, that you

are lamentably deficient in discernment, not to have distinguished the difference between a hireling servant of Mynheer, and the manager in chief of his affairs, private, public, and magisterial. But I excuse you ; I will consider that it is your island education that offends ; little should be expected from men like yourself, born no one knows how or where, cradled in a hammock, and deriving the very rudiments of speech from the coarse language of low-bred associates ; while your manners and uncouth appearance have been acquired ——”

“ In hell ! ” cried Falconer, after the momentary astonishment excited by the speech of the head clerk had subsided. “ Harkye, fellow ! I have learnt something else besides the parts of speech from my companions ; and by all that’s holy ! your administration of the affairs of Van Holme ends for ever in this world, if you do not instantly show me the way to your master — aye, and give me your boasted interest to boot, in obtaining a successful issue to my demands.”

Jan Lalenson was actually paralysed with terror ; it was some minutes before he recovered the use of speech.

“ Thunder and devils ! ” at length muttered Lalenson between his teeth, “ what will Mynheer Van Holme say ? I shall for ever be dismissed from his service ; and I would not at this moment rush rashly into his presence for the cargo of the “ Goode Vrouw ” herself. Indeed, noble young man ! ” he pathetically cried, “ I swear by the holy Virgin ! that Van Holme is at this moment most particularly engaged.”

“ How is your master engaged ? ” exclaimed the smuggler.

“ How is he engaged ? ” rejoined Lalenson, his teeth chattering, so as to render him scarcely audible — “ Ah ! how is he engaged ? The Lord have mercy upon us, and forgive us our sins ! — Van Holme is — smoking with his friends — ”

“ Fool ! exclaimed Falconer ; but go, lead the way, and in quick time — yet harkye, good clerk ! I have a cutlass by my side, a brace of loaded pistols in my belt : if you dare to breathe one word of what has passed between us, until I have attained the object of my journey hither — nay more, if you venture to move from my side one step further than I dictate, or utter one word hostile to my purpose — a brace of bullets shall quickly claim an acquaintance with your skull. So, mark — it is not the first time that I have stormed a citadel ! ”

Not daring to disobey, yet scarcely willing to proceed, Lalenson conducted the smuggler through a range of long passages or galleries, until they arrived at a large door covered with green baize. The worthy clerk here made another attempt to deter Falconer from his purpose ; but it was in vain, and only served to irritate the latter, who, placing the guide between him and the object of his repugnance, with no little exertion of strength, forced open the door. Falconer immediately found himself in a large and spacious apartment, but from the smoke with which it was filled, he was unable, until he had advanced a considerable distance, to perceive that there were several persons seated at the upper end, upon high sofas, all

actively engaged in the operation, which had at first so effectually obscured them from view. Distinguished by an additional cushion for his seat, and the usual badge of office worn by the local authorities of Bruges, Falconer was not long before he imagined that he had discovered Van Holme. "Every beast after its kind!" the smuggler muttered to himself, as he thought that he had never in his life beheld such an assemblage of corpulent gentlemen congregated together; but not more pre-eminent in beauty and stature, was Diana among her nymphs, or Dido among her handmaids, than the worthy Van Holme above his companions in obesity. The drowsy Fleming seemed scarcely aware of the presence of Falconer: not the slightest indication of any such feeling appeared to pass over his broad and unintelligent countenance. The whole appearance of the worthy owner of the mansion was sedative and expressive of composure, and yet there was something grotesque in his appearance; his vast countenance, apparently untouched by thought, or by care unsullied, was by no means relieved by the few long iron-grey locks which hung down over the back part of his head. A silver or plated chain, on which was suspended various baubles, dangled round his neck; his waistcoat was a green velvet with a red collar fitting loosely on his gigantic form, while the rest of his person was concealed in his robe of office, an habiliment which on all festive occasions it pleased him to wear.

An immense jug, of fantastical make, apparently holding some strong spirit, and surrounded by half-a-dozen capacious glasses, as "deep as the rolling

Zuyder Zee," stood on a small table close by, awaiting the Dutchman's pleasure. Not a word did the Leviathan utter ; his companions on either side of him were equally taciturn. At length, an old grey-headed fellow, who sat immediately to the right of Van Holme, and who, as Falconer afterwards learnt, had been admitted into the firm as a junior partner, seemed to be gradually awakening to consciousness. He slowly lowered his massive pipe, until it came on a level with his knee, opened his eyes to the widest extent, and pointing at Falconer, softly breathed out some scarcely audible words. They were probably addressed to Lalen-son, who, in a whining tone, proceeded to crave pardon for the intrusion, and to state the object of the smuggler's journey. Ere he had concluded, the whole party appeared sufficiently aroused to pay some attention to the intruder. Falconer, advancing towards Van Holme, addressed the worthy Fleming upon the subject of his wishes, coupling with them the request of the command of the vessel, and the warmest assurances, that under his direction, the affairs of the smuggling firm would always prosper ; for he was alike prepared to devote his fortunes and his life in the prosecution of that noble profession, and ready to sacrifice himself in the glorious cause of free-trade—in the advancement of the interest and welfare of mankind, and the especial prosperity of his employers. Van Holme appeared by this address to be more than ordinarily excited, for after swallowing an immense draught of smoke, he even opened his mouth and uttered a few inarticulate sounds : but whether of reprobation or approval, Falconer

could not say: all he knew, was that the sound was extremely like the voices of three or four persons speaking from the bottom of a well. The junior partner made an effort to ask Falconer what credentials or recommendations he could urge in his behalf. The smuggler silently replied, by drawing from his pocket a number of printed papers and proclamations, in which some of his exploits were described, and large rewards offered for his apprehension.

The attention of the smokers was evidently aroused, and the smuggler could not but regard as ominous, the peculiar expression with which they gazed upon him.

From some low and scarcely intelligible murmurs, which now broke forth upon their lips, it was apparent there was diversity in their counsils.

Van Holme seemed personally to afford a ludicrous example of fear, sense of dignity, and astonishment. His face became mottled with a strange medley of colours; his thick lips seemed to curl up, leaving his white teeth almost uncovered; he grasped with a convulsive firmness the huge ebony arm of the cushioned seat on which he reclined; while, with more agility than his appearance warranted, he threw off the robe which enveloped his knees, kicked down the hassoc, which had hitherto supported his legs, and, staring wildly about him, seemed to meditate a sudden flight.

Falconer coolly laid his hand on the lock of his pistol, for at that moment, he saw Jan Lalenson, like a spirit in a mist, glide through the foggy at-

mosphere from one side of the smokers, and take refuge behind the portly person of Van Holme. There could now be no doubt that the worthy clerk had informed his employers of the whole state of the proceedings.

But, while Falconer was deliberating how he should brave out the whole company, the grating enunciation of the junior partner fell with a ludicrous solemnity upon his ears.

“Unfortunate young man,” he said, “as a chief partner in the house of Van Holme, who is one of the principal magistrates of this ancient and venerable town, I know, from the confidence with which I have ever been treated by,”—here the worthy Hollander made a dead pause; an approving grunt from Van Holme encouraged him to proceed. “Young man, rashly, precipitantly, without reason, you have entered our presence, crossed our threshold, violated our hospitality, in a moment devoted to the most sacred of all duties, domestic enjoyment; disrespectfully, and obtrusively, you have presumed to engage our attention, irritate our minds, offend our general healths, by the suddenness of your appearance, the ferocity of your aspect, and the exorbitancy of your demands, so that it is doubtful whether the presumption of your wishes is not exceeded by the violence of your proceeding, or the overwhelming effrontery”—Here the voice of the worthy Fleming faltered, for Falconer drawing a brace of pistols from his belt, laid them on a small wooden stand, with their glittering barrels pointed in the direction of the speaker. Whether seized by apoplexy, or a sudden fainting

fit, the confidential partner of Van Holme, in the next moment, landed gradually from his cushions, and rolled insensibly upon the floor.

Not one of the Flemings moved from his seat, or offered to assist his fallen brother; but all burst out into a sort of guttural lamentation, which ended in a strange mixture of prayers and imprecations.

"By the soul of the devil," cried Van Holme, "the boy's spirit has melted from him like a snow drift in July." "Thunder and lightning! his legs are doubled under him," cried another.

"How will his wife take on? What will his children do?" "And what the devil shall I and his other partner do?" sobbed out Van Holme, "the accounts of the firm are all in his hands; he had the entry of every debit and credit; the whole responsibility was upon his shoulders; he has left us at the period of our yearly balance; like a thief in the night, he has departed from us with" — "A hundred thousand devils!" echoed the worthy Will Kofings, sitting bolt upright, and showing symptoms of life; casting a timid glance towards Falconer, he said: "Young man, we have been deliberating on your case," (in a rather curious attitude, thought Falconer,) "and when I was interrupted, I was just going to say, that we had come to the resolution to grant your request, had we not already most inopportunely, unfortunately, and unadvisedly, promised the command of our good vessel to a man whose whole character is at variance with yours; a man of blood, of outrage; a man, unlike yourself, more fitted for the government of a state than the helm of a vessel; in short, with infinite regret, we have to state, that we have notified

to our agent that the vessel with sealed directions is to be delivered into the hands of a certain Mark Falconer, who, unlike yourself, cannot temper courage with mercy; but, if he possesses the experience of a general, unites to it the brutality of a pirate."

"I am that Mark Falconer," cried the smuggler, exultingly, "I accept your offer, and forgive your hypocrisy: had ye not sense enough to detect my pretensions in the proclamation? nor sufficient discernment to discover me in the description of my person?" A guttural sound of astonishment burst from every throat, and the worthy junior, Will Kofing, was about to re-enact his fainting fit, when Van Holme, entreating him to put it off for the present, muttered to Jan Lalenson to make out an immediate order to Falconer for the command of the schooner; stating at the same time, that from his agent at the sea-port where the vessel lay prepared to sail, he would receive orders, stating the destination of the vessel and her cargo. Lalenson immediately obeyed; the weighty hand of Van Holme indented the paper with a signature, and Falconer, thanking his employers in more courteous terms than his last address, retreated from the apartment, wishing Van Holme the unbroken enjoyment of his meerchaum for the next week to come. It may easily be imagined, that the smuggler lingered not long around the classic abode of the worthy merchant; and after encountering one or two stifled growls, from the lean watch-dogs, along the quay, he was able to leave the vicinity of Van Holme, Brasse, Kofings, & Co. without further recognition.

CHAPTER XIX.

As the evening was bright and clear, Falconer was under no little apprehension, that his foreign costume, the strangeness of his appearance, and the formidable and no less suspicious glimmer of his pistols, might subject him to interruption. He therefore carefully avoided the recognition of every one whom he encountered. He was by this time within half a dozen miles of the place of rendezvous. It was, therefore, with no little surprise, as he pursued his way along a path bordered by trees on one side, and a canal on the other, with a tread so noiseless that he could scarcely detect its sound upon the turf, he heard the report of a musket, and in the next moment, a man of athletic form started up in his path.

The stranger touched Falconer's shoulder familiarly with his hand, begging at the same time the favour of his company to the neighbouring town, more in the tone of a command, than a *request*.

“ How now, comrade! you were knocking off the dew at a fine rate, when my black dog first barked at you,” slapping his gun as he addressed Falconer; “ so I thought best to bring you to a parley. I have lived too long on the sea-shore, not to know a sea-gull from a sand-piper, and by the jingling of the *pointers* in your belt, I deemed you were up and after other game, than star-gazing—a troop of dogs in the wind; eh! a barrel or two to stow in some shady valley, or an old hulk in the offing, waiting your pleasure and a fair wind.”

Falconer, himself unknown to his companion, was not long in recognizing an old friend under the garb of a Flemish officer of customs; yet, unaware what feelings of private animosity his former comrade might entertain towards him, he determined strictly to maintain his incognito, and accordingly replied to his interrogatories by exclaiming—“ By heaven, sir, yours are bold questions to an armed man; they savour not much of courtesy or kindness, but it is the way in which I have often heard, that your countrymen will greet a stranger; I am here on no dishonest purpose.”

“ I don’t know that,” growled out his companion; “ but if you are bound to the neighbouring sea-port, I will do you the favour of my company, willing, or unwilling, but must first crave the loan of your pistols, for by St. Paul, they have a most suspicious glitter about them; your character is under a cloud, and I’ll be hanged, if I think bold words or a fierce front, will stand for good counsel at our bar—so surrender, my worthy; for

Peter Lukestein stands no parley, where there is like to be fighting for it."

"Peter Lukestein!" replied Falconer, hesitating to deliver up his arms, "surely that was not your father's name."

"The name of my father and my clan," replied the other, forgetting in the excitement of the moment the foreign dialect, and speaking in his native language.

"We are countrymen," replied Falconer, "though one of us may have fallen away from his father's creed, and is armed under the jurisdiction of a foreign prince."

"Hold, sir," replied the officer of customs, "you may mean well, but I have a sacred duty to perform to the laws and government of this country. I claim you as my prisoner; I have reason to suspect you as one of a band of *dog-drivers*; nay, as a well-known smuggler. I would wink at this night-wandering and star-gazing; I would set you free, sir, were it not that there are thousands at this moment, deeply interested in the success of my exertions to confound and disperse as desperate a gang of men as ever whipped up a troop of dogs from their kennels, or conspired against the commercial interests of a free country."

Falconer replied to this address by whistling a well known signal; one which he had heard his companion frequently make use of, when otherwise employed than in his present occupation.

The officer of customs turned round, and, listening attentively for a moment, as if unaware whence the sound proceeded, quickly demanded

of Falconer where he had first learnt " that humdrum ditty."

" I forget exactly where," answered the smuggler — " most likely I picked it up on the sea-shore on a foggy morning, when *expedition* was the word, and the lurcher was running sly in the offing : but, since you have an ear for music, suppose I enliven our way by a song or two — what say you to the ' Campbells are comin,' or you are more partial, perhaps to ' Auld lang syne ?' I have known that song awaken deep and stirring sympathies in hearts apparently of harder mould than your own — men who have deserted kilts and kin, sworn away old friends, and betrayed their comrades ; then, profiting by the secrets they have acquired in a former profession, gone with cowards' hearts, but bullying words, and leagued themselves — with the slaves of the very men who once hunted them !"

" Hold, sir !" retorted the exciseman, " your defenceless situation shall scarcely protect you ; what devil could at this moment have inspired you to mutter of melodies, which are sacred from every recollection of kinsmen and country ? It is true that I may be spurned as the companion of Flemish gaugers — as the subject of a foreign prince, but I am still — "

" A Campbell !" replied Falconer.

Turning fiercely upon the smuggler, the Scot demanded of him his name.

" My name ! ah, ha ! it has grown rusty like my sword, so I am fain to put it by and exchange it for another."

“ Came you lately from the British coast ? heard you aught there of one — ? It matters not — why are you here ? whither are you bound ? and for what purpose have you crossed my path ?”

“ Stay !” replied Falconer, “ it were hardly fair of you to have the game for ever on one side ; I am not yet before the inquisition, nor the paltry tribunal of your herring-town ; but mark me ! — let there be no quivering lip or mantling cheek when I demand, wherefore you have fled from England ? why deserted your companions ? why in arms, if not against your former comrades, at least against men of the same deeds, and embarked in the same cause ? — you are silent !”

Campbell gazed upon his interrogator with a countenance, in which astonishment and indignation appeared to strive for mastery.

“ You are silent !”

“ Your name ?” fiercely demanded the Scot.

“ My name,” replied Falconer, “ has been registered in my deeds, and will not soon be forgotten ; but yet, before I answer you, I pray you to inform me, if you know aught of the agents of Van Holme and Co. upon these shores !”

“ They are unknown to me,” replied Campbell ; “ and if they are smugglers, sir, you have yet to learn, that the duties of my office teach me to scorn any connexion with conspirators against the laws — aye, sir, I am now an altered man ; the laws of every country ought to be respected — you smile, sir ! but, by St. Paul ! I will respect them.”

“ Will the smooth sea be ruffled with an oar to-

night," replied Falconer, repeating a well-known watchword among his band, whenever mischief was intended.

Campbell cast a scrutinizing glance on his interrogator; but, as he turned away, with a countenance of doubt and indecision, the smuggler perceived, although he wondered at the circumstance, that his disguise yet concealed him from his former associate. "A fisherman," said Campbell, "would store but a light cargo in so calm an hour as this." Then, gazing on Falconer, he repeated the countersign, saying, with affected carelessness, "When the king's broad arrow is blunted on Pentland-head, and the lady of the mist is on the waters ——"

"Then a merry time for the freetraders, and mirth and laughter round the cottage board!"

"Mark Falconer! my friend and comrade! can it be you? I heard that you were hanged! By Wallace! I am glad they were liars that said so!"

"Amen!" said Falconer.

"So, then, you are safe and saved. Mark, take your pistols again, man; prime them, charge them; put a couple of balls in each, after Tom Leopard's fashion. All friends well, I hope? — Peter, old Gull, and — Miss Woodville, eh? How goes on trade? — has the wind been off or on, lately? — are ye as rich as Jews, or as poor as — myself? — had another chace at sea from the cutter? — take care of that young captain, or he will cross us some day in spite of our fencing, our sea manœuvres, and land jugglers — gave him the

slip though, after the old fashion ; and whistled a bullet or two at the walking telegraphs on the beach. I thought that it was all over, so I cut cable and ran : but, getting somehow into shoal water, got hooked into this precious excise concern."

" And you will leave it directly," said Falconer. " Join us in a new enterprise, my brave fellow, and in a year or two, we will put our craft in ordinary and live like Mogul princes."

" As for joining in new enterprises," said Campbell, " I have had enough of the sea already—I am not so young as I used to be, and begin to grow nervous at the sight of shrouds and ratlings, — I have a strange fancy or two in my brain—hate being afloat after dark — afraid of walking the deck, lest some long, dangling rope should get under my chin. — Besides, I don't see how I can well leave — I mean, get quit of my employers."

" Why, walk about with your eyes shut, and they will soon want to get quit of you."

" Hush !" said Campbell, laying his arm upon Falconer's shoulder, " hush ! don't you hear them coming."

" Who ?" replied the other.

" The smugglers ! — have you loaded ?"

" No ! — Are there many ?"

" About fifty."

" Fifty ! and do you mean to fire ? — They will murder us before we have time to say our prayers, and make short end to our scheming. *One* is quite enough for your musquet, and say *two* for my pis-

tols : what are we to do with the remaining forty-seven ?”

“ Hold there !” said Campbell. “ I see you are a child at this work — *they* are only very large dogs ! — Get behind those thickets — make no noise — knock them down with your bullets — every one you kill is as good as ten pounds in gold.”

Falconer heard a low rustling noise, and in a few moments saw a pack of dogs emerging from different points of the wood, who, upon perceiving that they were watched, immediately dispersed, and sought, by swiftness of foot, to elude pursuit, and reach a small bridge, which spanned a stream dividing the Dutch from the Flemish territories.

Each dog carried a small package strapped behind his shoulders, so as not to impede his activity.

Campbell succeeded in wounding one unfortunate animal, who had not avoided with sufficient skill, the well-practised aim of the Highlander.

Falconer joined his companion in pursuit of the wounded animal, who having, by an extraordinary effort, reached the French territory, fell down and died.

“ Ha !” exclaimed Campbell, “ did the devil in the shape of that black dog, think to rob me of my just reward ? — but no ! — I’ll keep up the hunt for once, in spite of the French king.” So saying, he was not long in seizing on the unhappy dog, and rifling of its contents the small package strapped upon its back.

“ Ho — ho !” again exclaimed the Scot, as he leaned over the fallen smuggler. “ By all that’s

holy! — Jean Delahoy's celebrated dog Lion! — his master will whistle for him to no purpose down at the cottage in yon vale, and the old woman boil his porridge-pot in vain, to get him something comfortable against his return. Poor Lion! — the events of war and smuggling, are alike changeable to dog and man! There has been a price upon your head for weeks past, which, together with the fourth part of these neatly-packed silks — ”

“ Fourth part? ” cried Falconer, “ why not take the whole, and let this be the last time in which you act as agent in so dishonourable a cause, and one so foreign to your habits and your principles. ”

“ The devil! ” was the rejoinder of his companion, who, after a long pause, added, “ as regards what you say about country and principles, and sense of honour, and disreputable employment, I merely reply, by asking whether it is not more christian-like to shoot a dog for smuggling, than to enter the free-trade with a parcel of scape-gallows like yourself, and to cut the throat of the first poor wretch, who happens to know where you have run a bale of tobacco, or stowed away a keg of eau de vie; but, as regards what you hinted about taking the whole instead of the regulated allowance, there I own you have touched some of my prejudices; and, by Bruce himself! — by my father's ingle in the auld vinkee at Aberdeen! I will take your advice touching this matter: so, good Lion, I will commit your body to the waves, put your head and paws into one pocket, and your merchandize into the other; but come along, comrade, lest we be observed, and some officious associate cry halves.”



As they journeyed towards the sea port, off which lay Van Holme's vessel, Falconer unfolded to his companion all his future projects. After informing Campbell, that his former comrades, Peter, old Gull, and the Leopard, were anxiously awaiting his return at the *Soldat Cultivateur*, the smuggler endeavoured, by arousing every old recollection of successful and daring exploits — by appealing to the avarice, the pride, and the chivalrous feeling of the Highlander, to disengage him from what he termed his disgraceful employment.

“ Hear both sides, man! let us first see your brave companions, and hear what sort of tale they have got worth the telling, before I consent to put my neck into a halter of their twisting.”

“ Oh ho! you are afraid, then, as old Peter would say, lest you should chance some day to be stabbed with a Bridport dagger.”

“ The same,” replied Campbell; “ but surely this is the very man whom you have just quoted, running towards us, as though he had all the gend’armerie of the district at his heels.”

They had entered the town, and were proceeding towards the appointed place of rendezvous, when old Peter was seen rushing along the street with such velocity, that as Falconer stretched out his arm to arrest the speed of his comrade, the suddenness of the shock almost precipitated both of the smugglers to the ground. Great was Peter's astonishment at thus running against the captain, as he termed Falconer, but still greater, when he recognized Hugh Campbell as his companion.

“ Heaven have mercy on us, he exclaimed! it must be, it can be no other man, Master Camp-

bell himself, as I am a sinner! who would have thought it, so far away from home, and all the bonny bairns, and *wee toddling* things that he used to prate about—Lord love us! that he should have come so far; but there are two things, as the proverb says—‘a Scottish man, and a Newcastle grindstone, that travel all the world over.’”

“Where were you going old fellow?” said Campbell, not much admiring Peter’s simile, and not unwilling to get out of his fraternising grasp.

“Aye, sir!” added Falconer, “where were you hastening, against my orders, and at such a furious pace?”

“To get bail—or a knife—or a bit of iron.”

“Bail! for whom!”

“Poor Tom Leopard.”

“Bail!” cried Campbell, “the fellow looks more as if he were running away from bail, than going in quest of it.”

“What scrape has that fool Leopard got into?” said Falconer.

“Why, to quote a proverb,” replied Peter, “he has gone over Assfordybridge, backwards; for my part, I always thought the fellow was born at Little Wittham; he has got into quod, with nothing to do, but to look at his finger ends; for the landlord of the inn, has taken him in tow, for the score which we had the misfortune to run up in your honour’s absence.”

“How!” said Falconer, “did I not give you money until my return? did I not enjoin you all to act peaceably and orderly, in my absence, lest your conduct should awaken suspicion.”

“The same again, quoth Mark of Belgrave,”

replied the incorrigible Peter; “true, sir, all true; barring that you did not give us enough; we thought to drink your honor’s health in bumpers, and got on well, while we could chink out our dumps upon the counter; but being somehow *lathed* by Tom Leopard, that you would return yesterday with lots of gold, we held a bit of a jollification on trust, and invited a few honest fellows to bear us company.”

“ Honest fellows !”

“ Aye! but like all honest fellows, they proved *dangnation* cowards.”

“ And so,” added Campbell, “you could not pay the reckoning, and pawned Tom Leopard as the only valuable about you ?”

“ Avast there, Master Campbell, if you please. I hate the fellow who can spend the evening, and draw upon day-light, over an ownty mug, and a ha’pennyworth of backee; but howsoever, we all drank largely of Scheidam, and as we got merry, we had a bit of a sea song from old Gull. Thinking we were upon deck, in the new craft, we made a boatswain sort of a noise, and so I suppose, *gallied* the landlord. In comes his daughter, a *dansey-headed, dawken* sort of a thing, who says aloud, that her father wished us to leave off calling for more liquor, and to pay for what we had drank already. How old Gull did jump about the room, and roar; I thought that he would have *sowled* the girl by the ears, if I had not stopped him. ‘Wine! ’ he cried, ‘do you think that I will pay for such thin drink as that? Hollands, too! ’ he said, ‘it wouldn’t make a weasel drunk.’ So, calling out like a fearful one, ‘Hollands! brandy! over-proof

thirty per cent., he staggered about the room, and fell down quite overcome by his feelings. Out popped the girl; so we got old Gull up a bit, and set him upon his haunches on the floor, and gave him a splash of Curaçoa to revive him. But he didn't revive much, but began to *bat the eyes*, and halloo out, in a manner dreadful to hear, crying that he was a smuggler—that he defied hanging; and swore, that he would turn pirate on board the Dutchman's lugger, that there was a rare plot,—that he was in it,—that you were coming to steal the lugger, and he would be hanged if he'd ever split."

"Fool that I am," cried Falconer, gnashing his teeth; "Fool! to trust my plans to such confederates!—with such men!—go on, sir," he added; "on! with your precious story."

"Why, hold now, captain! betray ye! none of your *yaapping*; one would think, as the proverb says, 'that the devil had ridden through you, booted and spurred, with a scythe at his back,'—betray ye! old Gull's 'as true steel as Rippon rowels,' barring when he's in drink, and then its all the fellow's simplicity, and not his vice. But, as I was going to say, while we were assisting old Gull, we heard the noise of some dozen fellows, *agging* each other, as they came along: so off bolted all our guests, leaving Tom Leopard, and myself, to assist old Gull as well as we might. In comes the landlord; a *gotch bellied* sort of a fellow, with a train behind, like starved constables. The first blow is half the battle, thought I; so I began at the landlord; I asked if we were men to be *snaped* in our drink, like journeymen tailors, by such a *cat*

hammed fellow as he. He didn't like this, I think, for he *squirmed* about like an eel, and looked mighty *lungeous*. I told him, that for the sake of his house, and your honour's patronage, he ought to have given us a *shot-flagon*, or *host pot*, and not spoiled our wassail. I swore I cared no more for him and all the *pin-pannibly* fellows at his heels, than I did for the weaver's beef at Colchester; and that if such an *axwhaddle* fellow as he were to show fight, I'd let him see that there was more than one yew bow in Chester."

"Did he understand you?" said Campbell.

"O yes, for he called out to his men in Dutchified French, and looked at me *zowerswopped* enough. He held in his hand a piece of paper; I supposed it was a bill; and as he kept pointing to it and crying out, in an outlandish way, no christian could understand, ('tis a pity people won't speak plain,) Tom Leopard jumped on him like a cat, and, taking the bill out of his hand, lighted his pipe, clapped an *ownty* punchbowl on his head, and crouching down in one corner of the room, as if nothing had happened, began smoking away like a tolerable good'un. The landlord at this seemed quite *rumbustious*. I thought to myself of Michael Stonnar, and his bell, and the red coats and Captain Herbert; and, now, I said to old Gull, ' Holloa! — messmate! we have escaped the Clyde to be drowned in the Conway, as the proverb — ' "

"Hang the proverb!" said Campbell, "but the landlord?"

"O, as for him, the *toothy* old fellow, with all his band, charged us in mass. I made my escape out of the window; old Gull roared out that he

was a smuggler, and I think they thought he was a person of consequence, so they let him lie ; but poor Tom Leopard ! a dozen fellows at least, laid their paws upon him ; at first he looked quite *bewattled*, but when they began to carry him away, he bleared and roared like a child — he thought that they were taking him to prison, for, though Tom has whetted his knife on the ground of the Fleet, he is like enough to faint at the smell of a wall-flower, as the proverb saith."

" Go on, sir," said Falconer, stamping with impatience.

" I have not much more to say, barring that they turned Old Gull out into the street, and put Tom Leopard alone in a solitary room, poor fellow ! and locked half-a-dozen doors upon him. But to make matters worse, Tom walked through five doors in the night, kicking all the pannels down ; so to the old score of twenty ducats, the landlord has added twenty more, before he will let Tom go free ; which, though no lawyer, but an honest fellow, I say is against *corpus law* and the *charta act*."

" Campbell," said Falconer, " lend me forty ducats."

" Aye, *doey* now, Master Campbell," cried old Peter, " for poor Tom's sake — for the sake of the whole kit of us."

" Forty ducats !" said Campbell : " a very large sum ! you are the last person whom I should like to refuse ; but really, my dear Falconer, times are very bad, unless you can place some security in my hands."

" Security !" said Falconer, his eyes flashing fire, — " *security* ! I have lent you treble the

sum many a time — but here — take my silver-mounted pistols, I have no time nor temper to haggle for a price, or to drive a bargain."

Campbell examined the pledge, which was worth twice the required amount, with the greatest care and minuteness; at last, after five minutes inspection, he counted out the sum into Falconer's hand.

Tom Leopard was speedily restored to liberty, and the demands of the landlord of the wine-house *Le Soldat Cultivateur*, satisfactorily arranged.

CHAPTER XX.

LEAVING their comrades to keep a better look out than they had hitherto done, Falconer and Campbell, together proceeded to the harbour, and calling for a boat, were not long in directing their course towards the vessel, which lay a few furlongs distant from the shore. A better built vessel never captivated the heart, or charmed the eye of a sailor. With taunt masts and square yards, she had all the air of a king's ship, whilst her sails, already half unfurled, glittered in the breeze, and her pendant darted out from her mast-head as if impatient of delay. The beautiful arrangement of her rigging, the exquisite moulding of her shape, gave to every beholder an idea of swiftness and security combined. Lying on the almost motionless sea, within sound of the busy hum of the little sea-port, surrounded on every side by signs of peace, she yet appeared, to the daring imagination of Falconer, to *conjure up scenes of war and triumph.*

"She scarcely moves now," said Falconer; "she looks as gentle, and as beautiful, as though she could go on a pilgrimage round the world, with the olive branch of peace at her prow. But she shall be the minister of my will—over her, at least, I will be lord—from many will I yet claim tribute, to none will I lower her proud ensign, while I have an arm to wield a cutlass. She shall fly over the waters, scarcely less swift than the winds; and then—well! be it so: it is as pleasant to die bravely, in a battle or a storm, as in a close chamber in a calm, tormented by a doctor and a nurse."

The two smugglers took boat and proceeded to board the vessel whose beauty had so greatly excited the admiration of Falconer. On their arrival under her quarter, a ship's ladder was, with much politeness thrown down to them. Two or three civil-looking sailors came forward with the greatest alacrity to assist Falconer and his companion on board, who, in accordance with their wishes, were promptly ushered into the presence of the commander. This personage was sitting without hat or cap to his head, on the hatchway of the quarter cabin. He appeared to be enjoying in perfection, the almost vertical rays of the sun; his immense crop of dark hair precluding the remotest chance of a *coup de soleil*. A bottle of wine or spirits was standing beside him; from which he occasionally partook a draught, as if by stealth. He was dressed more in the style of a master of ceremonies at a sea-port town, than as the captain of a smuggling bark. His legs, which hung dangling over the sides of the hatchway, were compressed in a light pair of figured silk pantaloons. A silverthreaded rope

dangled round his neck, to which was affixed a figure of some saint, serving the double purpose of a tobacco-stopper and an object of veneration; while an elegant gilt mounted glass glittered upon his breast. A sword, borrowed apparently from the armoury of some country theatre, for the hilt was studded with the imitation of various precious stones, lay near him upon the deck. As Falconer approached, he gradually stretched out his legs, until they came in contact with this formidable weapon; then applying the extremity of his toes, he raised up the sword, until it came so near, that by the use of his hands, he was able to grasp it.

During the whole of this interesting operation, he deigned not to reply to Falconer's salutation; at last, thrusting his fingers once or twice through his long hair by way of preparation, he said aloud, "So, Mr. Smuggler, you have come here to obtain the command of the Sea-wolf: and if I understand aright, you have some little bits of paper in support of your claim."

"I have," replied Falconer, "I have them here, and request your perusal and compliance, as soon as convenient."

"Very excellent, indeed," replied the other, with imperturbable composure, "You have been a smuggler, Mr. Mark Falconer."

"I have, and shall be so again."

"You have witnessed much knavery in your time?"

"Some little of course, but more on your side the water, than on our own."

"Humph; you probably count on obtaining considerable advantage by procuring the command

of the Sea-wolf. Allow me one moment's glance at your documents?"

The request was immediately complied with. After perusing the papers for some time, the man with the immense head of hair, turning towards the smuggler, said, "Apparently, a document well drawn up, Mr. Falconer; it bates not in appearance, one jot of legality, the subscription too, looks like the hand-writing of old Van Holme; but care and caution are necessary; signatures may be forged, documents obtained surreptitiously, Mr. Mark Falconer."

"Do you doubt the integrity of my character, and accuse me of forgery?" was the fierce reply; "or is this but a base artifice to gain time, and deprive me of my rights?"

"Fair and softly, sir; we doubt nothing here. Fellows! do not crowd round Mr. Mark Falconer: within sword reach, or pistol shot, is quite near enough, under present circumstances."

The smuggler now perceived, for the first time, that the crew of the Sea-Wolf had been gradually surrounding him. He by no means relished his present situation; the mysterious glances of one or two of the by-standers awakened in his mind suspicion of some contemplated treachery; and not anticipating the slightest opposition, he had come unarmed on board. At length, again addressing his interrogator, he demanded whether he doubted his honesty, or denied the authenticity of Van Holme's signature?"

"Not so, my friend," was the reply.

"Do you refuse to deliver up the vessel within a specific time?"

“ Within a specific time, I do demur.”

“ Then, you German counterfeit of a sea-captain ! I am to understand that you set at defiance the orders of your master ? But I am not to be thus braved and insulted ; I call on your crew, the men around me, to witness ——”

“ Stay, Mr. Falconer ! I have also a witness on my part, and do not act without authority. Why ho ! Jan Lalenson !”

At these words the worthy clerk of Van Holme and Company sprang up like an apparition from the other side of the hatchway. Falconer perceived at once the solution of the conduct and language of the commandant of the schooner ; at the same moment he heard a violent splash in the sea, and beheld Campbell swimming, apparently for his life, towards a boat at some distance from the vessel. A shot or two were fired at him, apparently without effect, for immediately afterwards he reached the boat, when its crew, among whom Falconer recognized The Leopard and Old Gull, pulled away vigorously towards the shore. Resistance on his own part would have been useless, and, with the best possible grace, he submitted to his fate, and quietly surrendered himself to Dirk Lauthenloegs, as he found the commander of the Sea-wolf was named.

Falconer was treated with ostentatious civility, and assured of only a temporary detention. Dirk Lauthenloegs even undertook to swear by St. Christopher himself, that he should shortly be released from all trouble and anxiety.

The sarcasm of these words, and the malicious expression with which they were delivered, soon

convinced the smuggler that he had little to expect of kindness or security from his present captors ; and yet, standing again, as he felt himself to be, in a novel, but no less perilous situation, the predominant feeling of the moment was a dogged indifference to his fate.

As he passed on to his place of confinement, he encountered Jan Lalenson, who, with evident satisfaction, contemplated the present situation of the smuggler ; even holding up to his view, with a malicious grin, the identical gold piece with which Falconer had endeavoured to purchase his services.

A small cabin, with a few simple necessaries, was assigned to the smuggler as his abode. He heard the hum of the distant breakers, and he hoped that it was the prelude of a tempest, which would bury the vessel, himself, and her crew, beneath the waves. He strode with a quick and hurried step across his cabin, as though he felt a morbid delight in gleaning even the bitter experience, that it was so small, so narrow. He thought that he could be happier in a dungeon, or a prison under ground ; for there was something in the roar of the ocean, in the rush of the free element around him, that rendered captivity insupportable : even the dim and struggling twilight, which fell into his cabin from the little window, appeared to mock and torment him with a glimpse of the blue sky, or some opening star, which, like the bright eye of a spirit, was for a moment fixed upon him. Again he crouched down on the floor of his cabin, and, tiger-like, sat watching to spring forward when it should open to set him free.

He thought that he heard the sound of voices beneath his window — it died away like some mocking delusion of an over-excited spirit ; but again recurred, accompanied by the splashing of oars. All was now hope, expectancy, and courage. He heard a well-known song ; he knew but one man who could sing it thus, and he doubted not that that individual was at hand again, to deliver him. In another moment he was at the window, eagerly endeavouring to catch every sound. He replied to the supposed signal, by singing the counterpart of the song, but was deeply disappointed when it elicited no answer ; and, when every murmur died away, his situation appeared more hopeless than ever. After some time, he heard, as he thought, music and dancing upon deck, mingled with peals of laughter. Often had he heard the song which so lately greeted his ears, as a prelude to shouts of war, but never until now as an introduction to the scenes which he imagined were acting upon deck. Still more was he surprised when, from the motion of objects at sea, he perceived that the vessel was making rapid way from shore. Could it be that Campbell and his band had betrayed him ? and were bearing him off as a prisoner, to be delivered up to Herbert and the offended laws of his country ? The thought was madness. Again he heard strange and tumultuous shouts — men apparently racing to and fro upon the decks, and down the ladder ; while the vessel appeared to partake of the confusion of the crew, and instead of sailing, to drift uncontrolled before the breeze.

Falconer at length knew that there was a conflict

upon deck, but whether it was a mere drunken frolic, or an effort for his deliverance, he was unable to decide. A loud report was heard, as of a heavy and overloaded pistol, followed by a true British cheer of victory; and, in the next moment, the door of his cabin was forced open, and Tom Handspike and the commander of the *Sea-wolf*, struggling in each other's grasp, rolled upon the floor. The additional strength of Falconer soon decided this combat; but scarcely had he assisted Handspike in securing his foe, when half-a-dozen persons, in the garb of Dutch or Flemish women, crowded round him, and saluted him with a wild and vociferous glee, truly at variance with the character and delicacy of their sex.

Falconer was not long in recognizing, beneath this disguise, many of his old friends, among whom *The Leopard* was particularly prominent, holding in his hands the remains of the old pistol, which half-a-dozen balls, and a proportionate charge of powder, had at last rendered unfit for service.

Campbell was at hand, ready to explain how, in escaping from *Dirk Lauthenloegs*, he had plotted with Tom *Leopard*, Peter, and Old *Gull*, the deliverance of their chief; while the opportune arrival of the "*White Lady*," (a smuggling galley so called) with many of their old associates, upon another 'venture, gave them greater confidence in their project.

In the disguise of Flemish women, they had gained admittance on board the schooner; and having first intoxicated, and then overpowered, the officer on guard and the few sailors upon deck,

they fastened down the hatches, and secured the persons of the remainder of the crew.

“ Huzza! captain! what think ye of the ‘ White Lady’ now ?” cried Handspike, after the first burst of congratulation had subsided. “ Jib-boom and staysails, my worthy! It was a delicate matter, though, to trim out those rough old chaps into the likeness of fine ladies. Tom’s a weedy fellow enough, and a little black-eyed girl that feeds the poultry at our landlord’s, lent him her toggery; Campbell would not go to a farthing’s expense in anything, so we borrowed an old night-shirt that covered over all, and made him look as decent as a parson. Peter got the loan of a baby of a poor woman, for a stiver or two. — Storms and breakers! how the mother stood on the beach, and cried, and anticked away, when she saw us steering off with her kid on board! We stuffed Old Gull out with straw, to make him look like a respectable woman in the family way — near thing, captain, of blowing the plot. Old Gull’s devilish clumsy in petticoats — hung them up, sir, by Jove! in getting over the gunwale, and sported his leather breeches to all beholders! Peter, too, could not handle the youngster; I hear the squaller now; the fool has laid it down on the capstan.”

“ Poor little creature!” said Falconer, as touched at its desolate condition, he strove to still its cries, and, wrapping it up in an old cloak, gave it in charge to the newly-appointed boatswain, who, pulling off his hat, and scratching his head, mumbled aloud, “ Wean it your honour? *’spose* I must wean it, them women are too much fine ladies, I

warrant, to suckle it!" pointing, as he spoke, to old Gull and his companions, "else that would take a mighty trouble off my hands; — had no *'sperience* in these sort of things yet, your honour."

"A word with you, Falconer," said Campbell, drawing the smuggler aside; "I come in you know for second share after yourself in this ship's cargo?—lots of fine things ready for the market; so I'll just run below, and make an inventory before any are missing; I have begun," and he produced a piece of chalk and a broken slate, and off he ran to complete his survey.

"Who's fool now, fellow?" said the Leopard, addressing the astonished and crest-fallen Dirk Lauthenloegs: "barring the splinters of the old pistol, we've won as fine a prize, without bloodshed, as was ever fished for in these waters. Eh! who's fool now?"

"O spare the noble captain," said Peter, "these Dutchified fellows are all cousin-germans; and as the proverb says, 'as wise as the man at Gotham, who hedged in a cuckoo;'" then addressing the captive Fleming, Peter continued, "Cheer up, my lad! life's ever varying; can't all win, gentlemen and tailors; you ought to thank your good fortune, and go home and illuminate, because we did not hang you up at the main yard-arm."

In a short time Campbell returned, dragging by his heels the unfortunate Jan Lalenson, whom he had discovered half dead with fright, under some dozen packages of silk and lighter goods. Running for a few hours eastward along the Flemish coast, Falconer dropped anchor at last, off a seaport

town, well frequented by Falconer's old agents and correspondents.

Little time was lost in manning a boat with Campbell, Peter, old Gull and others, who, stealing in the dusk of the evening, close under the bulwarks of the old wooden pier, grounded on the sands, at no great distance from the town. Nor was it long, ere the eloquence of Campbell, the wit of Tom Leopard, and the provincialisms of old Peter, succeeded in inducing a considerable number of their countrymen to try their fortunes, under the dubious flag of the new captain of the Sea Wolf.

Once more then did Falconer behold himself free and powerful; he gazed proudly on the rude and reckless companions gathered again around him—listened with a pleasure hitherto unknown to their wild expressions of triumph; and scarcely strove to check the fierce and threatening glances that they cast upon the Fleming and his followers. And yet, he could not sympathize in the resentment of his band. Hatred, like love, can in the highest degree be concentrated upon one object, one individual only. The smuggler felt no vindictive feelings towards the Flemish captain; his mind was occupied by a more absorbing hate—he beheld himself, as the commander of a large and powerful vessel, manned by a crew, determined to fulfil his purposes, however unhallowed they might be—he thought on what he deemed his injured prospects and his blighted peace; forgot that he was surrounded even now by danger—that there was a price upon his head—recollecting only that *he had a rival.*

The miserable condition of Lalenson, and the account which Handspike gave of the gallant behaviour of Dirk Lauthenloegs, in spite of his effeminate appearance, determined Falconer, for once, to be merciful. "I may have need," he murmured, "of some redeeming act like this, to palliate my future deeds."

Accordingly, on the following day, when the Sea-Wolf had again run many leagues to sea, the largest boat was launched, and Lauthenloegs and Lalenson were immediately stowed aboard, with such of the crew as were either unwilling to share the fortunes of the smuggler;—or, willing, were supposed unworthy of confidence.

The poor little child, which Peter had borrowed of the Flemish woman, was handed into the boat, together with a few hours' provisions, and a small cask of fresh water. A couple of broken oars, together with part of an old foresail, were unwillingly granted to the prayers and intreaties of the Flemings:—when, like most men in similar desperate circumstances, they were endeavouring to obtain a few more articles better adapted to preserve their lives, their importunities were cut short by old Gull, who suddenly chopped asunder the painter by which the boat was made fast to the vessel. Thus were they cast adrift, many miles from land, almost without means of propelling their heavily-freighted bark, through a sea, which, as night approached, and the breeze freshened, threatened every moment to become more boisterous.

The Sea-wolf pursued her way, with a course slightly inclining to the north. Falconer wrapped his cloak around him, and threw himself upon the

deck, that he might find repose from his harassing and exhausting feelings. He drew his mantle over his eyes, that, shutting out every object, he might, if sleep were denied him, meditate upon his future fortunes ;— but he found himself baffled. He heard the low murmurs of a human voice, sinking into a deep and monotonous chant, and jarring in upon his feelings, with a strange and appalling discord. He closed his eyes, and on re-opening them, he saw a gleaming sword brandished over his head, and beheld an old man, apparently of gigantic stature, standing by his side.

It was Michael Stonnar ! In his small grey eye there was still the restless and hurried glance of insanity ; but the light of its intensity was gone ; the fierceness of its gaze was softened down. Falconer started on his feet, and threw himself into a posture of defence.

Stonnar placed his bony hand upon the shoulder of the smuggler ; and, though the touch was light, it seemed to retain him like a chain of iron. As Stonnar stood, with his dusky figure, struck out into bolder profile by the darker colouring of the sky—his white locks floating in the air—the bright and glittering edge of his dirk, within a few inches of Falconer—he formed no bad personification of one of the Druids, about to immolate a victim.

“ Smuggler ! outlaw ! let not thy frame tremble, or thy cheek turn pale.— I have thrown aside the spiritual garment, and I stand before thee like a mortal being—I have pursued *thee* with the keenness of the hunter, and the success of the far-scenting hound ! I was at * * * watching for

thee, when the boat put off to thy deliverance—I was in *that* boat, disguised, but not unknown to all. See! there!" and he pointed to the dusky figure of a sailor pacing his solitary watch.

"And what!" cried Falconer, retreating some paces, "what, old man, hast thou to demand of me?"

"What of thee? Was it well for the son of John Falconer, the minister of the holy word, to become a pirate and a bandit on the sea!—to slay for gold, which has made man renounce his country; and his God!—and thou! dost *thou* abandon the purpose of thy being—the end for which thou hast so long been preserved from the wrath of the tempest, and the keen edge of the sword! Awake! thou hast a rival! *he* yet *lives*! he is upon the waters! shall not the prophecy be fulfilled?—to the words of its denunciation! humble thyself, and obey!"

"When the wolf is prowling forth, and seeking for its prey,
And the hunter casts his knife and hunting spear away,
Then victory shall be with him, who twice has been at bay."

Falconer turned away with a smile, but the old man, pointing towards a particular spot in the ocean, whispered something in his ear. The countenance of the smuggler darkened; he grasped his hand convulsively, as if for support, in the shrouds of the mizen mast—his dark eyes glared out as if he were under the mastery of some wild and sudden resentment.

He muttered but a few words in reply; then, springing towards the bell, he struck it forcibly,—the well-known signal for all hands on deck.

The Prophet glided away to his place of concealment. "Helm a-lee, hard a-lee!" cried Falconer, suiting the action to the word, as dismissing Handspike from the wheel, he undertook its guidance himself.

"Loosen the jib and foresail sheet! bring her gently round! — maintopsail there! taughтен the braces! — and now — more sail! unreef the mainsail! every stitch unreef!"

The direction of the vessel's course was changed; dark and significant were the glances bent on Falconer at this sudden resolution. Here and there a murmur burst from the lips of some of the crew, but none were yet daring enough to disobey their commander in his present mood.

CHAPTER XXI.

FALCONER gazed upon the broad blue ocean, and felt with every breeze that fanned his cheek, the full renewal of those wild emotions, which had precipitated him into deeds for which repentance came too late. Dark and discontented were the looks of many of his crew; words, which he was hitherto unaccustomed to brook, were muttered around him, and it required all the energy of his character to repress the mutinous disposition of his followers.

A night and day had elapsed, since the Sea-wolf had held on her altered course. Little would her crew endure that changing resolution of their captain, which led him to desert the sweets of piracy, to gratify a wild, and, as they deemed, an infatuated spirit, which now hurried them towards those shores, so often the scenes of their exploits and their crimes; where they were sure to encounter danger, and, this too, without hope of profit.

But as yet, like a master spirit, he kept them obedient to his will; with a tiger-like submission they bent before the wild fascination of his glance,

and they dared not yet openly brave those fitful gleams of passion, which seemed to come and go across his countenance. But Falconer had yet a deep and appalling hold over the minds and energies of his comrades, in the supposed preternatural appearance of the Prophet of the Bell.

Many of the smugglers had seen this being, as they imagined, perish in his blazing turret ; again, far from their homes, beneath a foreign sky, they beheld him in the still hour of night, standing on the deck of the Sea-wolf, in mysterious converse with their leader.

In Hugh Campbell alone did this feeling appear powerless. His old associate now deeply regretted the presence of the Highlander, since in him he deemed he could already recognise a second Cassius. It might be pride, or the disappointed longings of avarice, not mutiny, or rebellion, that had worked a sullen change in his disposition ; yet Falconer scorned to inquire ; fearlessly he determined to brave the open hostility, or the secret designs of his former friend. In Handspike, too, he thought he could detect a sullen indifference, a dogged obedience, and an occasional lowering of the brow, which he could not rightly interpret.

The evening watch was set ; those of the crew who had no occupation on deck, retired to their different berths ; Campbell had command of the wheel ; and whether under the influence of enthusiasm, or deep hypocrisy, the Prophet was on his knees on the deck.

The wind, which had been steady all day, had now partly fallen off, and kept varying a point or *two almost every moment*, so that, in spite of the

quick eyes of the helmsman, the large sails occasionally flapped heavily against the masts.

Far away, scarcely to be distinguished from the dusky mists which rested upon them, might here and there be caught some glimpses of the dim and indistinct outline of a distant range of hills, which, like the visions of a fairy land, seemed to come and go, as a parting ray of light glanced among their summits.

With folded arms, apart from his companions, stood Falconer ; his restless eye wandering over the beautiful scene before him. He turned round at length to survey the Prophet, and he smiled ; —for one moment the old man bitterly goaded him on to revenge ; the next, mingling with his discourse prayers and scriptural phrases, he spoke of peace and forgiveness, with a sword clenched in his bony hand.

Falconer turned away, and gazed on the far-off sea, which yet glittered in the west, as though he watched for some object. The Prophet rose slowly from his kneeling position, and stealthily approaching the smuggler, said, “Outlaw ! dost still despair ? is thy heart faint ? Again, I say, this night shall he be delivered into thy power ; before the moon is on the wane, he shall fall.”

“ Away, old man ! you will but mock me with your phantasies, until I shall be as mad as yourself.”

“ Ah ! ha ! your rival ! let him live ! — and the blue-eyed girl ! what is it to me ?” shouted Stonnar ; then in an altered tone he said, “ Outlaw ! be firm !”

“ More sail !” shouted Falconer. “ By heaven ! they shall know that we have the wings of the

eagle, as well as the tushes of the wolf." Then, turning away from the Prophet, as soon as he beheld his commands obeyed, he approached Campbell, and addressed him in a tone evidently intended to be conciliatory.

"A fair night, comrade, although with a cap-ful of wind, and an ugly swell abroad. St. George for England! the old Hollander Van Holme was no bad judge of a sailing-boat; a man might fancy himself an emperor on board the Sea-wolf in an hour like this. The deep voices of the echoing waves are not unlike the shouts of an applauding multitude."

"Falconer!" replied his comrade, for a moment relaxing his hold of the wheel, and almost suffering the vessel to come up, head into the wind — "Falconer! am I to consider myself your companion or your prisoner? Am I to have no voice in the direction of this vessel? — no office but the most subordinate? For what, too, am I deprived of even powder to prime these pistols," grimly pointing as he spoke to Falconer's unredeemed pledges — "if pistols such weapons may be called, which cannot so much as muster a flint to either lock. But it is enough — you tremble, sir, and you fear me!"

"Fear is a quality," replied Falconer, "not very often coupled with my motives; and if I tremble this night in your presence, you must be robed in terrors more than ordinary. I am the master and commander of this vessel; and although I scorn to account to any man for my actions, or my will — if you cross not my purposes, oppose not my commands — ere to-morrow's sun shall set, the Sea-

wolf shall speed her course whither *you* may direct ; — can I say more ? ”

“ You have said enough to prove yourself a traitor — to prove that you are about to desert men who have risked their lives for your redemption, to purchase your own safety, by delivering them up to justice — to prove that you mean to leave the companions of your deeds — to desert, and to — betray them.”

“ Ha ! is it so ? — but stay — you know me not,” cried Falconer. “ Mark me ! — keep your eye fixed upon me, like a vulture’s on his prey ; and if you observe aught of treachery in my conduct — you have your remedy — a sharp one it is true — your pistols ! ”

“ Pistols ! you may safely instruct me to use them, since I am deprived of ball and powder.”

“ Ha ! I forgot,” said Falconer, then, pausing for a moment, he placed his cartouch-box in the hands of Campbell. “ Take it — hate me — nay even mutiny and rebel, but do not for a moment doubt my honour.” Then changing the conversation, Falconer sought, and not unsuccessfully, to lull the suspicions and excite the confidence of his companion.

Another hour had passed and Falconer stood in a musing mood gazing above him, while, with tightened cordage, and full and sweeping canvass, the Sea-wolf shot onward in her course, as though she had caught some of the soul of her commander. Twilight was stealing over the waters ; and, although the breeze was fresh, and dark and gloomy clouds at times concealed the mild light of an autumnal moon, the scene was one of deep interest.

and beauty. The smuggler beheld around him a vast extent of waters, with a grey streak of his native land in the distance ; and above him, groups of the bright stars, which, ever and anon, seemed to come forth and rejoice that they were privileged by their Creator to gaze on so beautiful a world as that beneath them.

Mark Falconer gazed, not unmoved, upon the scene before him — there was too much of poetry and enthusiasm in his mind, for him not to feel the unbidden influence which was stealing over it. His dark and imaginary wrongs seemed to grow to his mental vision less distinct ; while feelings, which had birth in brighter and happier days, came like the clouds of summer, to shed a sweet and refreshing dew upon the dark and arid spots of his heart. He had thought deeply and madly ; he had seen much of crime, but he was not yet wholly a villain. He half repented of the course he had taken ; he had even a longing to spend the remainder of his days in peace — to seek repose in some solitude where his name might be unknown : but whither could he go ? — all that he had was embarked in his present venture — his crew looked up to him for some daring deed to redeem their fortunes and his own. Should he retreat and seek another and a richer prize in some distant sea ? No ! pride and revenge forbade him — even the sullen and menacing looks of his own men still spurred him on. Yet, as Stonnar, the Prophet of the Bell, once more approached him, he could hardly refrain from reviling him for the apparently fruitless quest upon which they had embarked. *But there was that in the appearance of the old*



man, which even struck Falconer with awe. He knew not how a being so incoherent, so wild, could feel such an interest in the gratification of *his* revenge — *his*, who had been that old man's fiercest enemy — who had vowed destruction to his dwelling, and shouted with savage joy when his comrades gave it to the flames.

“It is past the hour,” said Falconer. “I see not the appearance of a sail upon the waters. By Heaven! Stonnar, in spite of prophecy, I shall find ye at last but a mumbling fanatic or a simple fool!”

“Peace!” said the Prophet, drawing up his bony figure to its fullest altitude. “Peace, unbeliever! while thy lip wanders in unholy mockery, even at this moment, the hour of vengeance is at hand — the unchained winds are about to rush from the south — thy foe looks pale at the presage of the heavens. There!” and he pointed with his staff towards the spot in question.

“I see nought,” replied Falconer, “but dark and lowering clouds, which appear almost to touch the sea!”

“Look again!”

“It is but a solitary sea-mew, winging its homeward flight; to-night you were certain — but in spite of counsels and prophecy, and kneelings, and what I trust in more, my own swift-sailing bark, my foe has assuredly escaped — and, to-morrow —”

“Maria Woodville will be the betrothed bride of Harry Herbert.”

“Never!” shouted Falconer.

“Ah! does thy lip tremble — thy cheek flush — thy hand grasp the sword, and the light flash from

thine eyes? Never! never! but I echo thee — see there! — the Greyhound!"

The smuggler started — then rapidly placing his glass to his eye, he gazed intently in the indicated direction. A vessel might now be observed, but so slight and shadowy was the outline of her sails, that, in the distant view, she appeared more like some silver cloud, than the production of human art.

"More sail!" shouted Falconer.

"Hast thou not worn his fetters?" exclaimed the Prophet.

"More sail!" shouted Falconer — "we met in deadly fight upon the shore, in the shady forest — we meet again beneath a moonlight sky, and in the open sea! — No escape for the vanquished! — no quarter from the victor! By Heaven! the pendant of St. George shall yet droop along the main, or my foe shall rejoice over a dear-bought and bloody victory!"

"Why, now I know you, Falconer!" said Stonnar, "now I know you, at the head of your brave and gallant crew, worthy of the name ye have acquired, and of the hereafter which ye are doomed to spend."

"More sail!" cried the smuggler, giving the usual command. "More sail," shouted Stonnar, "until every mast bend like a reed, and she fly over the waters, with the speed of the red-beaked vulture!"

Great was the change which a few minutes had effected in the appearance of the weather. Dark and heavy clouds came rolling from the south, and the waves had exchanged their melody for a deep

murmur, like the growl of some fierce animal, lashing itself into fury.

But Falconer heeded not the rising murmurs of the gale, nor the warnings by which she was surrounded. The threatening of the external tempest was nothing compared to that which raged within.

The crew had gathered, in silent and ominous groups, upon the deck. Campbell stood apart, watching, with the deepest interest, every evolution of the vessel; his anxious brow but too well betraying the apprehension which he entertained for the safety of his comrades and himself. Falconer's trusty body-guard, Peter and his companions, appeared to be the only individuals, who enjoyed the present scene, or the signs of the coming storm; they seemed to have imbibed some of the wild feelings of their commander.

The moon, in all her splendour, was lighting up, with a strange and awful beauty, the crested summits of the distant breakers—deepening the shadows of the vessel, and the anxious crew that paced upon her deck; as now, like a dark and shrouded form, with her tall masts and crowded canvas, the Sea-wolf was winging her heavy flight through the bright and flashing waters.

The hull of the distant vessel was now visible above the waves; and conjecture was soon busy among the smugglers, whether the Greyhound would brave the fury of their attack, or fly as soon as their hostile intentions should become manifest.

The wind every moment increased in fury; the Sea-wolf was driving heavily through the waters; every mast strained, every stay tightened to the utmost, beneath her press of sail. It was

even evident that she proceeded at a rate less swift than when under lighter canvas; yet though her deck was one white sheet of foam, and each wave against which she struck seemed to shake every timber from stem to stern, Falconer issued his frantic orders to crowd more sail. Amid every disadvantage, the Sea-wolf proved herself a gallant vessel; yet, clothed as she was to the "very eyes," it became evident that the slightest additional breadth of canvas, must be certain destruction to every one on board, with but one hope, that yard or mast might yield.

There was at this moment a deep expectation among her crew; every eye was fixed on Falconer, as he stalked fiercely and alone upon the quarter-deck.

The dark figure of Stonnar again flitted by Falconer's side, and they knew not but that the storm itself might have arisen, at the bidding, or the spells of this awful being.

But now the distant vessel became each moment more distinct. The Greyhound had hitherto shaped her course in a south-eastern direction, as though she intended making some port, higher up the channel.

The Sea-wolf was directly to windward; and it was evident would soon be alongside her, should she continue her course close hauled, against an almost head-sea. But it was not long before the cutter appeared to observe the suspicious bearing of her pursuer. Whether to display a superiority of naval tactics, or alarmed at the power and size of her opponent, she altered her course, and endea-

voured to steal away from the suspicious craft in the distance.

This movement was instantly detected by Falconer: his eye wandered over the dark and rising sea; he gazed on the tightened cordage of his vessel, as almost invisible in the spray, with his hand clenched on the rough tree rail, he watched the starboard bow of the Sea-wolf, buried beneath the foam. He paused, as though he trembled; he looked round on the countenances of his mute and thunder-struck companions—then with a bitter smile exclaimed, “More sail! the fore top-gallant sail—ho! more sail! though we blow her out of the ocean, my lads, and send her scudding like a sea-mew, between sea and sky!”

The groups of men upon the deck, appeared collectively to stagger: a murmur came from the lips of one or two, but, as if beneath the spell of a superior being, they obeyed. There was immediately a low shout; doubtful, whether of fear or tumult, when a man rushing from the fore-cabin, waved his hat over his head, and leaped upon the quarter deck. It was Campbell!

“Falconer!” he exclaimed, “strike! lay me breathless at your feet, but hear me! hear me! ere you plunge friends and comrades into destruction, which you cannot but participate.”

“Away!” cried Falconer with a frantic gesture; then, conquering the first impulse of passion, to give way to a feeling more bitter and reviling, he exclaimed—“It is not morning yet, Hugh Campbell! my command has not yet expired; I am not yet to delegate my power into your hands, or those

of your pale companions. Away! but you tempt me too far—we were friends once!"

"Never!" exclaimed the Highlander; "never! and while I have life and energy, no man shall say that Hugh Campbell allowed himself and his companions to be the victim of a madman or a fool!"

"Away!" cried Falconer.

"Aye, begone, vain man!" shouted Stonnar; "Woe to him whom we pursue—our vengeance shall go yet swifter than the storm at which thou tremblest, though it does but creep to our desires! Woe! woe! More sail!"

A terrific crash chimed in with these denunciations. The top-gallant mast, shivered to the foot, hung for a moment with its ropes and lashings over the lee-bow, then fell trailing into the sea. The main top-sail, ripped at the same instant from its yard, flew eddying along the waves.

"More sail! cheerily my men!" cried Falconer. "This is a glorious strife! the storm against our determined will! Courage! we have a gallant boat to sail in—and though the heaven looks black enough, we have a priest on deck to grant absolution! Cut! cut away with that trapping, quick, for your lives, my merry men! Rig out a jury mast! we must strain that false spar no more—" and he pointed to the mainmast;—"another point to windward!" as he addressed a sailor, to whom he had temporarily resigned the wheel: "we have turned the hare! and must now beware of her doubling."

"Falconer!" exclaimed Campbell.

"Away!" shouted the Prophet.

"Falconer! it is with you, not with that dream-

ing lubber, that I would speak. If we escape the storm, how shall we fly, with a ruined and disabled ship, from the vengeance of our foe?"

"Fly! from Herbert!"

"Aye, fly! is there some magic in the word, that it strikes such a discord now?"

"Tempt me no more," said Falconer, "it is not with you that I war; we have fought side by side, shared danger from the battle and the storm: Go! I forgive you! you have not seared my heart. Make me not mad, by standing between me and my revenge!"

By the loss of her main top-gallant mast, the Sea-wolf was evidently relieved; she laboured not so much through the water, and, although somewhat less obedient to the helm, the fears of her crew became more tranquillized and calm. Luckily, too, the halyards, clewlines, and braces, attached to the main-yard, had been disarranged by the fall of the top-gallant mast, so that it was some minutes before the sail could be set in obedience to orders.

The delay, brief as it was, would have been intolerable to Falconer, had he not perceived that he was now bearing down rapidly upon his rival.

It was, indeed, a fearful and animating sight: like the hawk and its prey, went the pursuer and the pursued. Each vessel crowded with canvas, and buried at times in the rough waves and thick mist, which rose like a cloud before their bows. The land lay directly a-head; the storm was gathered around them; every mast, and sail, and stay, strained to the utmost tension.—A wild and shifting light flitted over the distant sea, as the moon gleamed out upon the breakers. It was in awful keeping with the scene.

Falconer glanced once more upon the Greyhound. She flew no longer. Thrown up, head to wind, there was a glitter of steel upon her decks, and confusion, as of men arming; and then, a wreath of smoke issued from her bow, darkening as it rose, her sails with its shadow. It was the gun of defiance, booming over the fierce and sullen waters! The smuggler started! a low groan fell upon his ear; the ball had found a victim! and the spirit of Michael Stonnar had passed away! The crew of the Sea-wolf came crowding up to Falconer,—there were fury and desperation in the grim faces which scowled upon him.

“Will they not wait our coming,” he shouted, after a moment’s pause; “Arm! arm! it is not late yet! See that he escape not, good friends! see that he escape not!” Then, looking up at a French flag, which his vessel carried at her mast-head, he exclaimed, “Down! down with that pale standard; although an outlaw, I am English yet—unfurl! I have a standard of mine own! unfurl ‘the Wolf,’ and nail him to the mast!” As he spoke, like a gleam of light, springing from the deck, a crimson banner, bearing a wolf’s head in the centre, glittered over his head.

CHAPTER XXII.

On the same morning that Falconer arrived at the sea-port, after his interview with Van Holme, and the self-important Jan Lalenson, Herbert had crossed the channel to Ostend, in the Greyhound cutter, in order that, by change of scene, he might complete the establishment of his health. Maria Woodville, accompanied by a female relation, was his companion ; never was invalid more devotedly attended, and never did heaven receive the incense of purer prayer, than that which the noble girl offered up, for the recovery of her lover ; forgotten Falconer could never be, from the deeds which he had done, and the wild and agonizing fears which he had aroused ; but now his image became less distant ; and Maria Woodville lulled her fears to rest, under the impression, that the failure of his enterprize, the dispersion of his band, nay, more, his desperate attempt upon the life of Herbert, had for ever banished him from England. And her hope that he and Herbert would meet no more would have been realised but for Michael Stonnax,

Under the delusion that he was the chosen instrument of heaven to work out its decrees, to fulfil a wild and incoherent prophecy, which appeared every day to impose upon him some new obligation,—the brain of the Prophet had reeled beneath the excitement of circumstance, and the intensity of passion. He tracked the steps of Falconer with a bitter delight ; he followed him, and learnt too, at Ostend, of the arrival and appointed departure of Herbert, concealed himself by the connivance of Campbell and Handspike in the Sea-wolf, and finally, astonished Falconer by a knowledge of events with which it seemed that he could have become acquainted only by supernatural means. Then did he arouse the fears and vindictive feelings of the smuggler, telling him, that every seaport was armed against him, that cruisers were upon the waters in pursuit of him, that the maritime governments of Europe were apprised of his deeds, and leagued against him ; that nowhere was there security ; nay, more, that Herbert himself, in the pride of health and triumph, was in determined pursuit of him.

On the morning of that day, on which the prophet pointed out the first shadowy appearance of the Greyhound at sea, Herbert had sailed for England. As the weather was fine, and the wind fair, he thought that he had every prospect of terminating his voyage ere many hours after sunset. As his leave of absence was not yet expired, the Greyhound cutter, although in commission, manned with her usual crew, and well armed for any hostile encounter, could hardly be considered in active service. Hence, while Miss Woodville and

her companion were his guests, Herbert did not consider that it was imperative upon him to challenge every flag whose peculiar bearing might excite suspicion.

The Greyhound went gladly over the waves, and, with the speed and playfulness of the animal from which she derived her name, seemed, in very sport, to outrun the white crested waves by her side ; gracefully yielding to the wind until her long pendant skipped upon the sea.

On deck, almost alone, sat Herbert and Maria Woodville. *They* spoke not ; their eyes rested on the distant shore, which henceforth was to contain a home which they were to share together ; their hearts were too full of the beauties of the scene around them, of those novel and endearing visions of earthly happiness, which rarely, if ever, are vouchsafed to us but once, in the young spring time of hope and expectancy, when love, like a new creation, calls a brighter starlight into heaven, and sheds a purer enchantment upon earth.

How beautiful and how glorious ! when every other passion, every worldly thought, or selfish feeling is excited, and love —

“ Strengthening the weak, and trampling on the strong,”

has an indwelling eloquence, touching even the cold heart of pride, and turning aside the restless steps of ambition from its steep and dangerous path. And what, when woman loves with her whole heart, and the deep and impassioned enthusiasm of her nature — what, indeed, is the world beside, when, with maidenly pride, and the true dignity of girlish innocence, her heart is given

with her hand, and on one individual is concentrated every hope—and that one, how adored! when *his* home must be *her* home, and she goes forth from her father's door to be his companion; with her soft voice to soothe the troubled brow, and chase away every gloomy thought;—to be his guardian angel, when, tempted by ambition, pride, or thirst of gain, he has mingled in the throng of the sordid world; winning him back from sin and folly, to heaven, and to herself, and cheering up the home which she has entered,

“ There to be a light,
Shining within, when all without was night.”

The wind blew freshly towards the English shore, as the Greyhound bounded on like a creature of life, conscious of the wishes of those whom she bore. Far as the eye could reach was one unbounded range of waters, save where, like a grey mist beyond the bowsprit of the cutter, the land appeared far ahead. Seated on the deck, with the faithful Ranger at her feet, Maria Woodville was enjoying the beauty of the scene, and the still greater luxury of her own thoughts. The white sail fluttered above; a solitary star had risen over the sea. There might be some shade of mournfulness in the emotions which darkened her eye, or gave a deeper expression to her lip; but she never looked more beautiful, as though the soul had caught a hint from the external scene with which it had inspired her very being. She spoke not. Was she building up some glorious vision of future happiness—of earthly joy?—some bright dream

of a delusion, from whence she would awake to weep ? it might be :

“ Whom the gods love, die young !”

was said of old, and repeated by a mighty modern. It was the noblest epitaph that could be inscribed on the early grave of virtue, genius, or beauty.

“ Maria,” said Herbert, raising her hand to his lips, “ what spirit of enchantment have you called up from the waters, at a moment like this, with our native shore in view ? our home ! our future home ! Do you expect to see the red flag of some gallant rover, who, after levying tribute upon the first vessel he meets, puts the crew most mercifully to death ? Or do you expect to call up from the night mist, and sea, some phantom-ship as beautiful as yon silver cloud in the horizon ?”

“ Neither, dear Herbert. I have been reading old Spenser, and his witcheries ;” and then, looking up archly at her lover, she said,

“ O ! how can beauty master the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong !”

“ But if you must know, I was watching, as you spoke, the solitary flight of a sea-bird, that seemed seeking in vain for a resting-place ; and then I wished that our voyage were over, and we were once more safe on our native land.”

“ In our home, Maria, our future home ! It may be some time yet ere we arrive at port ; and though it is a glorious night, I like not the dull glare of those clouds in the distance ; the wind is rising, and though our brave little vessel might weather

the fiercest of these autumn gales, the open deck were not for you the most comfortable situation in a rough and rolling sea."

"Stay!" said Maria, laying her hand gently on her lover's arm; "do you not think this moment like—aye, very like—the evening when you left my father's house—and Falconer—"

"Recal not, I pray, that hour of my folly and my madness," eagerly interrupted Herbert—"that moment when I proved myself unworthy of your love; and, fool as I was, exposed you to danger and misfortunes even worse than death. But why call to mind such a gloomy night? why compare the present to so dark and desolate an hour? I think, Maria, that with all your imagination, you will have some trouble to make out the similitude, or fill up the canvas. Part of the scenery might serve again; we might fill in the back ground well; it is a bright, but uncertain moonlight; the clouds sweep swiftly by, and the stars come out and disappear in quick succession, as on that fatal night. But the figures in the foreground—the hero of the piece—the bandit of the woods—where is he?—the lovers, it is true, are present—" and Herbert gently pressed the hand of his companion; "but we have the Greyhound instead of Fairy, and the waters instead of the woods; and the chief actor of the scene, the destroyer, the outlaw, he is not here!"

"He is not here!" said Maria, almost echoing with a start her lover's words—"He is not here! but see!—'tis but the shadow of a cloud upon the waters; I had mistaken it for a sail."

"And a sail it is. Ho! Redmond! what look out?" cried Herbert.

At these words, a hoarse gruff voice replied, and a sailor, whose countenance seemed to have weathered many a storm, answered Herbert.

"How is this?" said his commander; "here is a sail, which by her bearing must have been in sight these twenty minutes, and yet no notice of her appearance, no call from Barton or yourself?"

"Why, captain, we did not think that we were under such strict sailing orders, just like as in common, particularly as we are not bound to give chase to every vessel that shows us the end of her jib boom, quite invisibly, and afar off, or the glitter of her canvas no bigger than the wing of a seagull; knowing, as well as yourself, that you have no relish for a wild-goose chase over the sea for nothing, though we have served under your honour's flag before, and, in spite of signals and the royal ensign, gave chase to his Majesty's sloop, the Galatea, for two days and a night, and should have *took* her, by Jove! and astounded the Admiralty, had she not got away from us in a fog."

Touching his hat as he concluded, the sailor gave a sort of confidential jerk to his trowsers, and then thrust the hand at liberty into his pocket for his tobacco-box.

"Never mind the Galatea now, Redmond," said Herbert, not much relishing the allusion of his chief boatman. "That affair would not have brought us promotion, or filled our pockets with prize money; but take a look through your glass at yonder sail; she is nearing fast. By heaven! if

the stranger were to run foul of us, and carry away a spar or two, you would not give signal, I suppose, because we are not exactly bent on fighting to-day."

Herbert snatched the telescope out of the hands of his subaltern as he spoke, and steadying the instrument against the shrouds, he stood for a few moments gazing on the distant vessel. Then, as he lowered the glass, he said aloud, "She comes swiftly as the wind itself upon our track; it is strange! at this time too! What can be her intentions? whither can she be bound? By her appearance a showy boat enough; clean in the quarter; neatly rigged as a royal yacht, with a glitter of arms upon her deck. She looks likely enough to do some mischief, if required. By heaven! she gains on us — a French flag at her mast-head!"

"Aye, and the old rag of Holland at the mizen-peak," replied Redmond.

"You are right," answered his commander, "she is abroad on the water on no honest purpose. Ah, now the wind has risen! What mad devil can her captain be, to drive her through the sea with such press of canvas?"

"Some fellow, no doubt," said Redmond, "who has good reasons for practising swift sailing, and loves running before a storm, without a reef in her topsails, better than encountering an honest broadside from a clipper like ours; — that's my version!"

"She bears full upon our quarter, and watches every turn of our vessel, like a hawk, ready to dart upon its prey — more sail! — does he hoist more sail? with a head and bow buried beneath

the foam! — a point or two off, Redmond — more! more yet! we must run for it!"

"Had we more men and fewer women aboard," growled out Redmond, in an under-tone, "we should not have orders to run before such a 'long-shore lubber as that, or show the rudder of the Greyhound to a dandified Frenchman; — that's my version."

"There goes her topgallant-mast! — now! now we have a chance," cried Herbert; "and with a dozen more men aboard, I'd take the risk of a broadside against her pale standard, for a skirmish on the ocean!"

"Herbert, dear Herbert," exclaimed Maria Woodville, timidly, "why is the flag of that vessel an object of surprise and apprehension?"

The sailor looked tenderly, yet anxiously, on the countenance of the fair girl who thus addressed him; then, after an evasive answer, he earnestly besought her to retire below; for the wind was rising, and the night promised to be but rough. It was in vain; — she expressed her determination to remain on deck, so long as they were uncertain of the intentions of their pursuer.

"Pursuer! we do not fly, Maria!" said Herbert. "Ho! Redmond! another reef in the mainsail, and bring her nearer the wind; the gale is rising! let the mad fool come; he shall have a hot welcome, and a sharp scrutiny, ere we part again! I will know who he is that dogs my footsteps."

"The stranger crowds more sail!" said Redmond

"She is armed! and full of men!" added Maria Woodville.

“ Stay !” said Herbert, as Redmond was about to execute his orders to shorten sail. “ Stay ! no reefing now—she gains on us—no reefing !”—then, in an under-tone, he added —“ My pistols ! and cutlass ! see, too, all arm who can :—I would rather trust to the fury of the storm, than resign one that I love to the mercy of the crew of yonder vessel.”

“ She has a confounded sulky look about her, that vessel,” said Redmond,—“ bent on mischief; cares no more for signals than a heathen for a missionary ; and is not much to the taste of an honest man like myself, who loves good fighting, when it is reasonably tempered with mercy.”

“ Is there no hope ? No show of resistance, dear Herbert, to our pursuer ? Can we not fight him ? O, do not trust, I implore thee, to the mercy of that crew — or to the vengeance of ——”

“ Maria, do you know him ?” said Herbert, with a start — but in a voice so low, that the movement of his lips, more than the words themselves, revealed his meaning.

The truth, ere this, had flashed upon his mind : he remembered, that, a few days since, he had received intelligence of a vessel, fitting out in the contraband service, for Van Holme and Co.

He had heard of Falconer’s arrival at the same port ; and he doubted not of the identity of that pursuer, to whose fierce will the very winds and waves seemed tame. Disengaging himself from the grasp of the trembling girl, as Redmond answered the sign which summoned him to approach, Herbert hoarsely whispered in his ear the well-known signal —“ Arm ! arm ! all hands on deck !”

O, what a word were that to the young and enthusiastic, in their first career of glory, when they

go forth to win the laurel of renown ! what a word to the stern, brave veteran, when, confiding in himself, his country, and his ship, he scans his opponent from afar, and hears the signal which is to lead him on to a certain, though not a bloodless victory.

“ Arm ! arm ! all hands on deck !” echoed Redmond : — then was heard the clashing of cutlasses, thrown rudely on the deck — the hoarse grate of ropes and chains, as the guns were rolled to their respective ports — and even a half-suppressed cheer from some of the men, as they saw the French flag waving high above the canvas of their pursuer.

The Greyhound, like most of the larger cutters in war-time, mounted a few guns. Four of these, being in the hold of the vessel, were now hastily raised upon deck.

“ Redmond,” said Herbert, calmly, “ another sword ! one heavier and firmer in my grasp than this.”

Every order was obeyed with that alacrity which, in times of danger, forms so prominent a feature in the courage and discipline of British seamen.

A few bounds more, and the Sea-wolf would be within reach of the guns of her opponent — and swiftly that pirate-ship came on.

Herbert, his whole attitude stamped with a stern determination, stood gazing on the fierce and rapid approach of his opponent. Yet, as if before the influence of some emotion, too strong to be entirely suppressed, the brow of the young commander of the Greyhound darkened, his lip for a

moment quivered, as his eye fell upon the preparations for mortal combat ; he seemed again to wish to seek safety in flight, and to curse the rolling sea and the fierce wind which baffled him.

But there is much in the apparatus—the preparation for battle, on the deck of an armed cruiser, which, at the moment it appears most to startle and to awe, kindles a feeling not unallied to enthusiasm itself. The clashing of arms, the beating from quarters, the low murmurs of determined voices, which seem, not in words, but tone, to spur up the courage of the combatants, the rolling or mounting of the guns, the bracing of cordage, the furling of sail, and above all, the deep determination breathed in every look, and gleaming in every eye.

There is an inducement, perhaps, stronger than all others, in making men brave in hours of peril. In spite of friendship, of patriotism, and of love, we are most proud of the admiration of those whom we most hate. Herbert beheld his rival—he thought of the interminable hate which that rival ever expressed, and he vowed, that if he fell, he would not die unforgotten, or unavenged.

Then, having disengaged himself from the grasp of the almost unconscious girl, he issued his orders, and called upon his men to exert every energy in the combat.

They answered him, as British sailors ever answer a brave leader, with a cheer.

“ Fight, then ! for life, and liberty, and glory, are hanging on each blow — fight ! and if ye conquer — if ye can beat off the boarding-pikes of your opponent, or silence his guns, I will reward

ye as sailors were never yet rewarded ; my life shall be devoted to your happiness — for, remember that ye are Britons ! ye are men ! A lonely, a defenceless girl, calls on you to save her from the hands of a bandit and a slave ; and I, your captain ! your friend ! your commander ! will lead you on to victory ; or if ye fail, will bequeath ye my example — how to die ! Yet, Redmond ! here ! thou art brave, but thou art gentle ; a rough sailor, but a kind-hearted man — this were no place for *her* ; take *her* away ; be gentle, be very gentle ; let her not be witness of the strife."

Redmond approached to obey ; but the maiden, unclasping her hold, started from her lover's side, and drawing herself up to her full height upon the deck, seemed endued with new resolution—the full light of her eyes fell reproachfully on the countenance of the sailor ; there was a majesty, a royalty, in her beauty, as though the stern heroism of her father's nature was now enthroned where womanly fear and feelings hitherto had sway —

“ A minute past, and she had been all tears,
And tenderness, and infancy ; but now,
She seemed like one who championed human fears,
Pale, statue-like, and stern.”

And then——but a shout was heard upon deck, a cry of almost despair, as, the wind snapping the halliard, the union ensign was wafted over head, into the sea. “ She strikes !” burst from a dozen voices, for few on deck had observed the accident, while a fancied yell of triumph from the pirate vessel, seemed to say, that her crew had also formed the *same* conclusion.

"He dies, who repeats those words!" cried Herbert.

"The flag! where is our flag?" shouted the crew. Maria Woodville had disappeared; it was but for a moment, when waving a silk banner over her head, her countenance, her voice, her beauty, partaking of the inspiration of the moment, like the spirit of victory, ~~she~~ exclaimed from the midst—"Be not dismayed! I will be your standard-bearer!" A cry of joy and enthusiasm burst from every lip; swords were brandished in the air; a shout of defiance, deep and loud, echoed over the waves; even the eyes of the swarthy gunners glistened for a moment like fire, as, with impatience, they watched the lips of Herbert for the wished-for signal.

"Fire!" cried their commander, as he brought the vessel up into the wind, and opposed her broadside to the head of her pursuer.

"Aye, fire away, my hearties!" said the chief boatman.

Wild was the cry that rose upon the gale, but drowned in an instant, by a deeper, and a more fearful sound, as the bow, the waist, and the quarter, of the Greyhound seemed to flash with light, and she poured a raking fire, with murderous precision, along the deck of her opponent. Silence, deep and dreadful, followed; as though the hushed wind, and the rough deep, were awed. Not a gun answered from the pirate, who, as if stunned by the shock, seemed to pause in her career, and plunged her bow deeper than ever into the sea. Then, as the smoke cleared away, up sprang, like a ruddy gleam of light, the red signal of extermi-

nation, while the pale standard of France fell slowly behind the canvas.

Falconer's hand was still upon the wheel; it trembled not; his cheek was paler than usual, but not with fear. He had escaped untouched.

"Helm a-lee! — cut the tillar ropes! — hurl him into the sea!" shouted a multitude of voices.

"Madman and fool!" cried Campbell, approaching Falconer, the calmness of whose countenance had now given way to a smile, the interpretation of which was to be found only in the dark depths of his heart. "Madman and fool! unhand the wheel! ere I grasp you by the throat; — unhand the wheel! or bring the vessel round, and let us answer with a broadside the fire of our opponent."

The Highlander was felled to the deck: the crew, headed by Handspike, rushed upon their commander, but old Gull, Peter, and his colleagues, kept them at bay. On went the pirate vessel on the wings of the gale.

The Sea-wolf was now within pistol shot of her opponent; a cloud at that moment seemed to blot the moon out of the skies. But the Greyhound was again prepared to fire; in the sudden shade, the light of the matches, descending upon the guns, glared like the red eyes of some fierce animal, about to spring in the gloom upon its prey. But then — Campbell shouted in despair, as every eye turned on the dimly-seen form of the smuggler at the helm; — then came a shock, which shook from their feet the crew of the pirate vessel; a sound, too, like the crashing of timber, and the wild rush of waters, as the Sea-wolf bore down beneath the ocean the hull of her opponent. A wild shriek,

which combined every sound of human agony, echoed over the deep, while, as the Greyhound sank, the report of some half-choked gun, amid the waters, or a random pistol shot discharged in fruitless vengeance, were all the show of defence which her brave and devoted crew could make.

A moment before, and the Sea-wolf was rushing on, apparently to her destruction, to encounter in combat, a disciplined and heroic foe;—a moment after she was alone upon the deep,—like a guilty being, in darkness and in solitude, with not a witness of her deeds; but the roar of the storm was around her,—the rush of the foaming waves.

Terrified and astonished, the crew of the Sea-Wolf dispersed from the menacing circle which they had formed around their commander, and Falconer was again alone.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FALCONER cast a fearful glance along the waters : then, as if a flash of light had fallen on the spot where he stood, his figure appeared to glow beneath the inspiration of some new emotion. Waving his hand, he exclaimed, " It is something in the dearth of fame—in the trampling down of every hope—in the abdication of every gentle feeling, aye, in oppression, in peril, it may be—even in death, to know that I am avenged !" A shrill whistle echoed over the startled sea, as if breathed by some spirit of the deep, in defiance of the smuggler. It was Redmond's whistle ! A boat, apparently swamping, was perceived at no great distance, on which five or six individuals were desperately clinging for life.

A cry of " Save them," burst from every lip but Falconer's. Ere he had time to interfere, a boat was launched—the oars were thrown a-board, and Campbell, Handspike, and two others, were about to leap into her, to rescue the shipwrecked sailors from peril, when Falconer shouted, " Stay ! comrades, stay ! whither so fast without your captain ?" then laughing wildly, he exclaimed, " Peter, old

Gull, and Tom Leopard, man the boat ! I myself will go with you to rescue our new-made friends. The crew of the Sea-wolf gazed sullenly and suspiciously on the individuals thus addressed. The eyes of Campbell and Falconer met with an expression of mutual hatred and defiance.

Peter, and his two associates, leapt into the boat; Falconer was about to follow, when, as he doubtfully gazed on the sullen looks of his crew, he hesitated ; as though, treacherous himself, he dared not confide in the honesty of others. He commanded Peter and his comrades to row on without him ; then stooping forward, he hoarsely whispered them, to pass with the boat slowly under the Sea-wolf's larboard quarter. He then paced hurriedly to the stern : every eye followed him ; Campbell started —for he saw the uplifted arm of the smuggler—he saw something glitter over the side of the vessel, and the next moment, he heard the clash of a sabre thrown into the boat.

Rapidly, beneath the powerful strokes of her rowers, the boat shot on towards the shipwrecked men. She was instantly perceived, and a shout of joy came over the waters.

But the sky again became obscured, the waters darkened, and nought was to be perceived, but the dim outline of the wrecked boat, or the sullen shadow of some dark object gliding rapidly towards them.

Peter, and his comrades, soon returned to the Sea-wolf ; but they were alone ! These men looked not up to the deck, but as they ascended the gangway, one lingered behind for a moment. Campbell

marked out that man, for he saw him stealthily wash something in the sea ;—it was the sabre !

“ Where are the men whom ye went forth to rescue ? ” shouted twenty voices.

“ They sank ere we reached the boat,” was the reply.

“ False ! ” cried Campbell ; “ false ! ”

The Highlander was not alone in his suspicions, or his anger. Desperate as were the characters and fortunes of many of those with whom Falconer was leagued, they had yet enough of virtue to shudder at the scenes which they had witnessed. With fierce gestures and menacing words, a party had already surrounded Peter and his comrades. Threats passed from mouth to mouth ; and one or two of the malcontents had already seized on Peter, and hurled him down upon the deck, when Falconer sprang into the midst. “ Away ! ” he said, “ away to your berths ! to your stations ! to-morrow, I will lead ye to easy and certain victories, which shall be an ample recompense for all the dangers which ye have this day undergone.”

It is doubtful whether this address would have preserved even Falconer’s personal safety, had not a shout from a sailor at the fore-top directed the sympathy of the crew to a more interesting object. Clinging to what had formed part of the railing of the cutter, was to be perceived floating upon the waters, the apparently lifeless form of Maria Woodville. To save her was but the impulse of a moment.

When placed on deck, the unfortunate girl exhibited some faint signs of animation. One, so

lovely, so beautiful, so unfortunate, would have found sympathy and kindness in the hearts of savages. The crew of the pirate vessel crowded round her, to offer with officious zeal any attention which at that moment she might require.

It was indeed a scene of deep interest, to behold a lovely, unprotected, and almost lifeless girl, parted from every friend, snatched but a moment before from death, surrounded by rough and desperate men, who were now offering her every attention.

Maria Woodville was slowly reviving. Every stronger beating of her heart was now recorded to the anxious inquirers by those who had constituted themselves her immediate attendants; while, as her breathing became quicker and more audible, the colour returned to her lips, and a slight glow spread itself over her cheeks. At length, with a smile, as if awakening from a dream of a brighter and better world, she gently raised herself up into a reclining position, and slowly opening her eyes, the light of those blue orbs fell, unconsciously, upon the torn and dishevelled banner of the Greyhound, which they had laid at her feet; then, with a vacant glance, they wandered over the countenances of the pirates, smugglers, and desperadoes, by whom she was surrounded, until they became fixed with a deep and conscious intensity upon the figure of an individual, who, standing apart from the rest, had buried his face in his cloak, while the low, deep sob, betrayed his emotion, and revealed that he had not gazed unmoved upon the scene before him. He would have fled from the presence of the weak girl who gazed upon him. He could have

wept over the bitterness of that fate which he had brought upon her — he had forgotten his wrongs ; time and events seemed alike annihilated ; there were but two eras in his memory : the one, the happy youthful days of enthusiasm and love, over which she presided ; the other, the present — the dark present, when, like the dying victim of his hate and his revenge, her gaze was fixed wildly upon him.

“ She has marked him out,” murmured a dozen voices. Falconer would have spoken, and commanded his crew away, but he dared not trust to the tone of his voice. He would have retreated to the security of his cabin ; but then, like a being rising from the grave, as pale, but yet how lovely, she, who a few moments since seemed hardly to exhibit signs of life, rose slowly and stately from the couch on which she had reclined, and with a step which appeared to fall without an echo on the deck, approached the spot where the smuggler stood.

Awed and terrified, the fierce crew of the pirate shrank back and left her a free path. She had placed her right hand across her brow, as if to shade her eyes, for it was night, and the glare of torches flashed wildly around her. She approached — she altered the position of her hand, as if she would move away the mantle from the brow of the smuggler. Falconer retreated ; as he did so, he stumbled over the corner of the hatchway, and his cloak fell from his grasp. She gazed one moment wildly upon him, and faintly uttering his name, fell senseless into the arms of a sailor, who had closely followed her steps.

Falconer staggered as beneath a blow, when he

saw his victim fall. It was for a moment only : he mastered the tones of his faltering voice, and threw the wild energy of his wonted spirit into his eyes, as adjusting his fallen cloak over his shoulder, he quickly stepped forward among his men, and with the voice of command, exclaimed, "Shame on ye, fellow seamen ! will ye leave a lovely girl coiled half dead at your feet, without proffer of help or assistance ? Have ye rescued her from the sea to bid her die before your eyes ? Away ! bear her gently to the cabin next mine own : Handspike, Leopard, and John Gull, be ye the sole guardians of her chamber ! By Heaven ! we will yet restore bloom and beauty to the cheek, and life and gladness to the spirit of this fair daughter of the ocean. Am I obeyed ?"— Prompt and cheerful was the compliance with his command. The newly-awakened interest for Maria Woodville calmed the fiercer passions of the most turbulent of the crew, and in their anxiety for her safety, they appeared to have forgotten those evil deeds which but a few minutes before they were burning to avenge. Each man withdrew to his duty or his berth ; and Falconer slowly paced to his station abaft the wheel, there, unobserved, to indulge in his own dark thoughts.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MANY hours elapsed ere Maria Woodville appeared to arouse from the apathy into which she had fallen. There was more than one honest heart that prayed that she might never again awake ; more than one individual among the pirate crew, who, as he heard the unwonted inquiries of his too anxious comrades, feared that the time was at hand when innocence and loveliness would plead in vain.

When the first gleam of morning glided through the dim windows of her temporary chamber, she was lying, still unconscious, upon a rough ship-mattress. Handspike was at her side, watching with deep interest, every sign of returning life ; while two of her other attendants stood at a little distance ; the one with a stern and sullen sneer, watching the apparent solicitude of the sailor, the other, twisting a piece of rope into various fantastic shapes, as if apparently unaware that there was aught in the scene before him to cause the eye to weep, or the heart to beat with a wilder and deeper emotion.

The gentle girl raised her head slowly from the

pillow, and placing her hand softly on the arm of the rough sailor, without lifting up her eyes to encounter his, faintly said, “ I am not ill, dear father; why stand these men around, what mean they here?” But a change came over her feelings—the momentary bloom passed from her cheek—she did not weep; but a broken murmur died away like the echo of some dreadful thought. She gazed on the well-known forms of those around her—on the tattered standard of the Greyhound, by her side—on the strange arrangement of the apartment in which she lay; then, with a wild glance, she fixed her eyes on Handspike with an expression that appeared to say, that all her earthly hope was lost. It was a strange moment—one in which the strongest feelings, or the most inveterate habits of those around her, seemed awed and spell-bound. But it was so—Handsrike would have given worlds that he might be relieved from the light and gentle pressure of the girl’s hand upon his arm—old Gull looked sullen and thoughtful; the habitual sneer on his lip had almost passed away. Each of the spectators appeared to wish that some one would speak.

At length the Leopard,—for even his perpetual whisper had been for some time unheard, unable longer to restrain the volubility of his disposition, began to whistle aloud part of a merry song that had “ no mirth in it.” Old Gull turned round and sternly rebuked his companion, saying, “ Peace, fool! the girl is praying.” It was true that her lips moved; but it was strange, that one who ever had a sneer for aught like devotion, should stand *thus* wondering and subdued.

"She is silent now," said the Leopard, as he doggedly resumed his attempt at amusement.

"Away, fool," said old Gull, "away! and learn what is passing on deck; bid Peter resume his watch, and not sneak out of the way like a French master-gunner in action. Hang me! I'd rather hand the maintop-sail in a squall, than stand gaoler to a half-drowned damsel in an hour like this."

Throughout that day, Falconer did not once obtrude himself upon his victim. Many a time, through the lonely hours from morning until sunset, did the eyes of the pale girl rest anxiously upon the entrance of her cabin; but still he came not—one, by one, her attendants withdrew, she knew not wherefore; and when the shadows of evening had rendered every object indistinct around her, she found herself alone. Yet could she hear at times the tread of a hurried footstep in the adjoining cabin, or the heavy flap of the sails against the masts as the wind fell off.

In deep and fearful anxiety did the prisoner watch for the return of those rough sailors, in whose presence she felt that there was some protection. But nature prevailed over the tired spirit, and Maria Woodville again slept. She awoke—she saw a form standing by her side: she had been dreaming of her lover; she thought Herbert had come to welcome her to another and a better world; she rose, and clinging to his embrace, sobbed wildly and fearfully on his bosom.

He passed his arm around her waist, and pressing her to his heart, whispered in her ear, in a broken and sepulchral voice—"By the hopes of a *devoted love*—by a fate which hath driven me

to risk all on earth, and more than all in heaven —
Maria Woodville, thou art mine."

She started. It was not the voice she expected to hear ; but she knew not then that it was Falconer. At that instant the sound of a pistol shot rang upon her ears. The clash of swords, and the shouts of men followed. Cries of "mutiny !" and "treason !" mingled with shouts of "England !" and "Down with the red flag !" were echoed on the decks. Falconer pressed a hurried kiss upon the forehead of Maria Woodville, and rushed forth on the deck.

There he beheld a scene which demanded all his energy and courage ; an armed ship, apparently a frigate of the first class, bearing English colours, was to be seen afar off, among the waves, in the moonlight. Every sailor had rushed on deck, to observe her approach. The fears and passions of all were aroused, while the mutinous spirit, which in some had never been quelled, but only slumbered, received a new impulse.

An attempt was made by Campbell and a few others, to strike the flag of the pirate, and to secure their own pardon, by delivering up the vessel and her commander to their pursuer. But the very boldness of the design defeated it. There were but few whom Falconer's recent deeds had not made indifferent to his fate ; but many, who would have joined the mutineers to dispossess him of command, were unwilling to forego the anticipated advantages of piracy ; and still more so, to run the risk inseparable from surrendering to a British ship of war.

Campbell found himself immediately resisted.

A furious and desperate combat raged upon the deck. Hand to hand, and foot to foot, fought the partisans of either side. Twice was the Wolf flag beaten to the deck ; twice was it again raised in triumph by the exulting pirates. Campbell and his party, overpowered by superior numbers, were at length driven from the stern of the vessel to the very foot of the mainmast. Here the strife was renewed with threefold fury, the Highlander fighting with all the desperation of a man of lion-like courage, maddened by the consciousness of the fearful risk he ran of being sacrificed to the savage vengeance of his foes. Again a cry of exultation burst from Falconer's party, as they beheld their opponents suddenly give way ; but they did but retreat to make the conflict of a more fearful and desperate character. Boats, hencoops, and other moveables on deck, were formed into a temporary barricade by their comrades in the rear, while two or three of the guns were furtively dragged from the ports, and ranged in fearful precision, so as to sweep their opponents from the deck. Wild was the shout which they raised at this manœuvre ; and the defiance which Falconer's party dared to echo back, died on their lips when they saw Campbell and his friends proceeding to disable the vessel, and render her an easy prey to her pursuer, by hacking the cordage with their swords, ripping and tearing down the sails, and even applying the axe to the lashing of the bowsprit. At this instant Falconer rushed upon deck. In the struggle for the flag, all the hatches had been closed, and he had been kept below during the fearful strife in which his *fortunes were at stake.*

It almost seemed that Falconer was the master of his own destiny : at the very moment when he rushed forward to lead on his men against the ramparts of the mutineers, Campbell fell, wounded, upon the deck ; and in another instant Falconer stood, conquering and unhurt, upon the barricades of his opponents, the whole of whom were either captive, or hurled over the bows into the sea.

A prisoner, and in irons, Campbell beheld himself surrounded by scoffing and reviling men, who a few hours before echoed every sentiment which now he had only endeavoured to enforce.

Peter was his companion : strange enough, this man had also been found among the mutineers. Falconer gazed on his followers, and as he numbered the dead who had fallen, and the living who had supported his cause, his eye sought in vain for Old Gull, Handspike, and the Leopard. They had appeared, he was informed, upon deck but once, and then seemed disposed to favour the mutineers ; for when the strife commenced they raised a mutinous cheer.

More pressing considerations diverted, for the time, his attention from this intelligence. Though a victor, he feared that there was scarcely less danger in conquest, than in defeat. He had triumphed for a moment, but many of the best and bravest of his band lay dead around him, and the survivors, fierce and wounded, cursed with excited feelings, the cause in which they had conquered, and the chief for whom they had bled. As he cast his eyes around him, the awful spectacle presented itself of his almost dismantled ship ; sails half torn from the yards, flying loose in the wind ; stays,

lanyards, clew-lines, in short, much of the useful tackling of the vessel, destroyed and mowed off by the swords of the combatants.

Falconer feared that the struggle between him and his pursuer would be but brief. Yet, neither his courage nor his calmness forsook him. He breathed out vengeance and hope to his followers. Slowly and heavily his own vessel toiled among the waves; how different in beauty and in speed, to what she was a few hours since!

It was evening; but in the bright and glaring moonlight, there was no hope of escape; labouring on as the Sea-wolf did, with scarcely a sail secured by its proper rope, with a disabled crew, and a shot-pierced hull. Falconer gave but a moment to irresolution; every hand was called into requisition, to restore order on board the vessel.

Though few and feeble, their hearts yet beat proudly, as with a wild cheer, they replied to the orders of their captain — swore that they would follow him through all danger and peril; and defend their vessel while she had yet a plank above water.

There was many a promise too, with which Falconer beguiled them: with glowing colours he pointed out to them all the delight of a roving life among the Eastern seas, where the strength and speed of their vessel, and the unfrequency of any armed intruder, would afford security to their deeds.

But yet he felt, as he looked around him, upon men who had so long followed his fortunes, and claimed him as their leader, who had now in the hour of his peril mingled their fate with his fate,

that he owed them one act of justice. He had but to utter the name of Campbell, when every voice exclaimed—

“ To the yard-arm with him! — away!”

Pale, and heavily ironed, Hugh Campbell was marched between two sailors upon deck; he was followed by half a dozen other men, who, with drawn swords over their shoulders, paraded him towards the spot where Falconer stood. In idle mockery of his feelings, a sort of sham trial was instituted; the boatswain, in consideration of his argumentative turn, was appointed the prisoner’s counsel; an old rope-yarn mat, serving for a *wig*, while a piece of sail-cloth was thrown over his shoulders, as a substitute for the official gown. Falconer was the judge. By his side, a rough-looking fellow, with a most diabolical grin upon his countenance, stood, holding a ragged pole, upon the top of which was placed a red cotton night-cap, to be *hoisted* upon the head of the judge when he should pass sentence of death. Six or eight fellows, most of whom had been wounded in the encounter, were chosen as jurors, on account of their impartiality; while a decrepit little being, with one eye and a wooden leg, hobbled about with a bit of deal board in his hand, upon which he swore “ the gentlemen of the jury.”

At any other time, in any other situation, Falconer would not have allowed this cruel mummery, but he feared the spirit of his men; he knew how great was the temptation to betray him—and openly he dared not brave their inclinations.

“ Mike Cleaver!” shouted a tall gaunt-looking man, with long thick ringlets of black hair curling

down his shoulders ; “ Mike Cleaver, you are a bit of an imp of the law, as we all know, though you were frightened away from Van’s land by the kangaroos, before your time—open the pleadings, my lad, for the crown, and give us the benefit of your learning.”

“ A right good move,” said another ; “ little Mike’s the fellow for that ; he’s a terrible fine speaker, and his mouth’s awry with all manner of hard words.”

“ Come, none of your chaffing, old boy,” said the individual thus addressed. “ I scorn to disguise, but that I have studied the laws a little.”

“ The statutes at large, since your escape from Botany Bay,” said the first speaker ; “ but never mind that, Mike, get on with the business of the court, or we shall be obliged to look to the guns, and call up the powder-monkeys, before the gentlemen of the jury have decided upon their verdict.”

“ My Lord, and gentlemen of the jury,” said the man of law, jumping upon a water-cask, and proceeding to address the court—“ you are all too well acquainted with a court of justice, to need any explanation on my part. It would have been better to have spared our feelings upon the present occasion, for, from our earliest years, most of us can boast an acquaintance with —— ”

“ Go on !” shouted a dozen voices, “ what do you stop for ?”

“ A glass of water ! — Thank you, sir, kindly — bless us ! how the enemy nears us — he will be along side of us ere twenty minutes.”

“ Go on, little Mike !”

“ Bravo !”

“ I beg pardon, gentlemen, but the noise — ”

“ O, never mind that — it is only old Sam, the carpenter, knocking the iron hoops off the water-cask.”

“ Well, gentlemen, I was only going to say, that from your earliest years, you can boast an acquaintance with the courts of justice, as many of you have felt great personal inconvenience from attending the assizes — ”

Here the outcry redoubled, and the unfortunate pleader, after vainly endeavouring to obtain a hearing, threw up his brief as old Sam knocked down the water-cask, and stretched the man of law at full length upon the deck.

“ To the yard-arm with him, away !” cried a savage-looking man, pointing at Campbell.

“ Let him dangle in the air, as a warning to all traitors, and bleach like a whiting in the sun !”

“ He has spoiled rope enough already,” cried two or three of the crew, drawing their cutlasses, and brandishing them in the eyes of Campbell.

The Highlander stood unmoved ; there might be a want of colour in his cheek, and his eyes for a moment were dim, but no other sign betrayed aught of fear or passion.

His light blue eyes at length flashed with fire at repeated insults, and his hand, with a convulsive movement, sought for his cutlass, as Falconer, approaching him, said —

“ I am in your debt, Captain Campbell ! and to the amount of some forty ducats ; but since, from

old acquaintance sake, I should grieve that you should die my creditor, you will, I trust, find in this purse, the sum required."

"A receipt, Captain! — a receipt!" said Mike Cleaver, seeing that Campbell had grasped the offered purse, and, strange to say, whether unconsciously or not, was deliberately counting every piece.

"Aye, a receipt, my good fellow; for your *executors* may dispute the payment, though you die like an honest man —"

"The pistols are now yours, Falconer," replied Campbell, "and they are sufficient receipt — you will find them in my cabin. I die happy — I am ready — move on, sirs!"

Falconer gazed on him with wonder.

Of all virtues, courage is that which men of fierce and lawless spirits most admire; it is almost the only charm by which they are swayed; and, in the present instance, men, reeking from the contention of a fierce conflict, pursued, apparently, without a chance of escape, by a royal cruiser, after performing the farce of a mock-trial, were gathered in silent and admiring groups around their victim. Neither vessel held on a rapid course — the wind was falling off, but the crew of the Sea-wolf already thought that they could distinguish the guns of their pursuer, and interpret the menacing signal at his mast-head; and then they turned away, for this was the moment that they had chosen for the mockery of justice.

There was now a deep pause among the men; they looked at each other, then at their commander,

then stretched their eager eyes far over the sea. There was a change in the movements of their pursuer: her jib, then her foresail, fluttered in the wind, and the corresponding yards of the main and mizen masts, swayed, one after another, from their former position; the pennant at the main, which had hitherto pointed right a-head, now streamed over her starboard bow. As if in doubt and hesitation, though in reality, it was but the effect of her manœuvre, she appeared for a moment stationary, then, changing her course, and running many points nearer to the wind, she was rapidly leaving the Sea-wolf on her starboard bow.

“She flies! — by Heaven!” shouted a dozen presumptuous voices — “she likes not the glitter of our red flag, nor the gleam of our honest swords.”

“Sea-wolf for ever! — St. George found that we were not men to be frightened by his old flag at the masthead, nor the huge rows of his smoky teeth! — she flies! — and we are free! — Pirates for ever!”

“We’ll rummage the Indies, and take toll on every skimmer we meet, when we get out of this awkward channel, and the clutches of such like as her,” shouted Mike Cleaver.

“Chalk up ‘Cinnamon,’ on our mainsail, and steer for the Spice Islands!”

“She is leaving us indeed,” said the old boatswain, very seriously, putting a battered telescope to his eye. “She flies, by Jove! — well, that’s a queerer; ‘strikes me somehow, she likes not the look of us—rum fellows to be sure—stout chap my-

self, — knowing one for a captain—good boat, too, this *Sea-wolf*, but sails rather flimsy — masts a little bit shaky—powder at a low ebb—damaged too in the hull, Mr. Campbell, which I think was rather too bad a trick to play us, though I says it that shou'dn't, being your 'torney like."

"Let her go to the devil," said one of the crew, greatly relieved by the altered course of the cruiser, from the apprehension of the gallows.

"Send the Highlander and his purse after her!" said another, looking at Campbell.

"Aye, aye, put him adrift upon a plank with an old grindstone, and he'll seek his fortune, and get as rich as a *coral* merchant."

"With a lemon-skin to hold fresh water in, and the tail of a dried herring for his cargo."

"Remove the prisoner — take him below!" said Falconer: then, after a pause, he added, "we will consider of his fate to-morrow."

A few murmurs burst from the crew, but their commander was obeyed. Their anger also had found a new object; and, as they bethought them of their prisoner, the unfortunate Maria, they muttered threats and imprecations against Peter and his dastardly companions, and clamourously besought Falconer, to do justice upon their offences.

"To-morrow!" he said, "to-morrow!" as his brow darkened, and his fierce eye glittered like that of some wild animal at bay.

The object of the frigate's change of tactics was now apparent; she had a wealthier prize in view. In the misty horizon was to be seen a

vessel, which looked like a sloop-of-war, convoying two or three merchant-men up the channel; while their tardiness, as sailors, and their inferiority in size, rendered them likely to be an easy prey to the British ship.

CHAPTER XXV.

“ **HOLLOA!** cooped at last! fairly caged! You look ill-conditioned enough, friend Peter!” said old Gull, in a hoarse voice, the under tone of which was intended for a whisper, as he addressed the object of his solicitude, who lay, heavily ironed, in one of the fore-cabins.

“ Who’s there? — is that you, John Gull?” replied the other, most wofully. “ I am as low in the world as the bucket at Thirleston; not a quid of tobacco in my pouch: never thought the captain would have done this to one of us, though.”

“ Something must be thought of, and in quick time too,” said old Gull, sentimentally: — “ you sha’n’t die, Peter.”

“ Thank ye, thank ye kindly,” replied the other.

“ A tyrannical rascal, this Falconer,” said old Gull, raising his voice.

“ Amen!” said Peter, “ but don’t bawl quite so loud; *you* can get away, but they have taken care to spoil my running. So I’ve just been thinking of making my will.”

“ Never mind about your will now, Peter,” re-

plied old Gull ; “ I’m no lawyer, and don’t want to be—hang me ! comrade, something must be done ; if you don’t escape to-night, they’ll hang ye on the morrow.”

“ Will they ? ” said old Peter, in a whining tone. “ This comes of keeping bad company — O ! had I a little more regard for what is *mutable* within me, I should not have come to this — ‘ he must have a long-hafted spoon,’ as the proverb says, ‘ who sups kail with the devil.’ ”

“ Never mind the devil now ; take up your irons, man, and don’t make such a clanking on the floor. I’ll shew you something. I know a trick or two, I’ll put you and Tom Leopard in the way of. Come on, for they mean to hang ye on the morrow, Peter — come along, good Peter.” So speaking, and followed by Peter, old Gull led the way to Miss Woodville’s cabin.

Here they found Handspike and the Leopard ; the former standing near the head of the couch, while the latter was amusing himself with playing at “ cat’s cradle ” with a piece of string, and humming a comic song, to a tune dismal enough to chime in with the howl at an Irish wake.

The captive maiden lay as if still unconscious of all around her ; and but for an occasional movement of the thin garment which veiled her neck, no outward sign would have told that yet she lived. Her hands were gently clasped together, as if the last waking thought had been of devotion, while her hair fell in dark profusion down a neck of unspotted whiteness.

The lamp which had hitherto lighted up the cabin was just flickering in its socket, but the moon,

at the full, threw a broad gleam of light across the wave, fully revealing every object around.

"There is not a breath of wind to-night; the schooner is like a log upon the waves," said Handspike.

"Waves!" cried old Gull; "hang me! the sea is as smooth as the bowling-green at the 'Chequers.' Hang me! if I won't be off; a word or two by an honest fellow has been whispered in my ear; and from what I judge of our captain's humour, he don't mean to string Hugh Campbell to the yard-arm to-morrow, without a friend or two to keep him company."

"Who's fool now, fellow?" said Tom Leopard, looking up for the first time from his occupation—"Who's fool now? Can we walk upon the sea in our boots? or rig out a plank with a broom handle, and a flannel jacket? Who's to take care of the young *leddy*? and be troubled with old Peter and his rusty irons?"

"Peace, fool!" said old Gull. "The boat with a couple of oars on board, hangs over the stern; a hatchet and a cord will do her business; then pull away, my boys, in a calm for Old England. Hang me! there is an honest fellow at the helm, I reckon, who has promised to keep his eyes shut until all's right, and we've fairly launched her."

"I'm for ye, my lads," said old Peter; "a clear head and sound judgment, to give you advice; though I have a spancel or two round my legs to keep me from kicking: the sooner we are off the better, say I."

"We may yet escape," said Handspike, looking through the cabin window.

“ Escape !” said Maria Woodville, starting from her slumber, her cheek now flushed with an unusual glow — “ Escape ! O no ! no ! no ! it was but another delusion of that dream — Escape ! But I am ill, very ill, and I will try to sleep again ; it was nothing ! it was nothing ! I thought that *he* was here ; and when I went to clasp him, he changed into another form ; and my heart was crushed.”

“ We may yet escape, dear lady,” said the sailor, placing the hand of the trembling girl between his own.

“ O, is it you ? will you take me back to my father ? shall we go now ? the journey is a long one ; and I think I have forgotten the way — but you know it ?”

“ You must keep still and compose yourself, my lass,” said old Gull, dashing away a tear, as he turned from the imploring gaze of the captive.

“ O, when I begin to love and trust ye all, when I repose on your friendship and your courage, ye will leave me ! ye will leave me !”

“ Leave you ! never !” said old Gull.

“ Do not cry, Miss Woodville,” said the Leopard. “ I’ll take you home myself, when I get ashore.”

“ You,” said old Gull, “ she’s under my care ; I’ll bear her off from the clutches of Mark Falconer ; — she’s too pretty a girl by half to be his sweetheart ; and hang me ! I’ll marry her myself, the first time I come alongside a church.”

“ Two words to that bargain, master,” said the Leopard.

Handspike shot an imploring glance towards the speakers, as, turning to Maria Woodville, he be-

sought her to lie down, and repose for a few minutes.

“ We shall be ready soon, dear lady, ready to save you ! but, after what you have seen and suffered, you have need of rest.”

“ Rest !” she said, with a voice thrilling with deep and impassioned feeling :—“ Rest, Handspike !”

“ O no ! no ! there is no more rest for me in this world ; no more hope or happiness here ; and if we even escape from this fatal ship, the days I yet may live will not be those of quiet.”

“ Let us be getting about something, and not wasting our time here, fellows,” said the Leopard.

“ Aye, aye, think on me, my friends,” said old Peter ; “ I am not very nimble, with half a hundred weight about my legs ; catch me here, set me swinging ; I don’t want ‘ to lead cradders’ at the yard-arm, as we say at York.”

“ None of your lingo, Peter,” said the Leopard ; “ but I can’t help laughing, to think how you would look with those pot-hooks and hangers at your heels, and half a dozen fellows in chase.”

“ We must be moving,” said Gull : “ take care of the lady, Handspike ; lay hold of the brandy-bottles, Leopard. Confound the fellow and his irons ; come along with as little noise as you can, Peter.”

Maria Woodville was not slow in obeying. Hope, for a moment, had given her strength ; and, with a heart wildly beating with contending feelings, she leant on the arm of the sailor ; and in silence, and with a noiseless step, passed from the cabin, and prepared to ascend to the deck.

Previous to stepping on the deck, the whole party paused. Raising his head, so as to get a view of the deck, without being himself perceived, Old Gull, after a few seconds' observation, told Handspike and Tom Leopard that all was right; and bade them, together with Miss Woodville, steal along close by the gunwale to the stern, lay hold of a rope, which they would find there; haul the little boat close under the taffrail, and await his coming.

It was a moment of deep anxiety, even to Handspike and his companions, but far more so to Maria Woodville. Life itself seemed to hang upon the incidents of the next few minutes: her very breath appeared to die away from her lips; and her heart stood still, as though it were awed and hushed by an overpowering excitement.

They reached the stern of the vessel, and succeeded in embarking in safety in the boat, passing by the "honest fellow" as Old Gull described him, who had taken the helm; but who, intent on smoking his pipe, never once noticed them; but kept gazing on the pendant at the main-top, as it curled listlessly down the topmast shrouds, while the sails, flapping occasionally against the mast, were the only objects which broke in upon the deep and unusual silence.

In a short time the party was joined by old Gull, who had been absent on some secret expedition, but who now jumped into the boat, and was about to cast off the rope, by which she was attached to the vessel, when his purpose was arrested by the plaintive voice of Old Peter, who, leaning over the rail of the larboard quarter, besought his former

comrades not to desert him, but to assist him in escaping.

“ Good friends, I beseech ye,—honest Tom Leopard, Handspike, and old Gull, remember the days which we have spent together, and the nights in which we have got merry—I’ll do any thing on board the boat to make myself useful—lend you my hat to bale her out if you ship a sea, or lie down under the thwarts with these cramping old irons on to keep her steady in a squall: ‘ a friend in need, is a friend indeed,’ says the proverb.”

“ Who’s fool now, fellow?” said the Leopard. “ The devil take you, and your proverbs, you’ll rouse the ship—Lord! you fool, old Huggins at the helm there, has twice looked at you out of the larboard corner of his eye; besides that, we’ve only got two bottles of brandy on board—not enough for a new comer.”

“ Put the boat’s head about, Thomas Leopard, and take the fool in,” growled out old Gull. Doggedly and unwillingly, the Leopard stepped to the head of the boat, and pretended to offer some assistance to Peter. As the latter descended, being an old man, and hampered by the weight of his fetters, at the moment that he was about to step into the boat, his foot slipped from off the gunwhale, and although he succeeded in regaining his hold of the rope, suspended over the vessel’s quarter, the act of his falling sent the boat off half a dozen yards from the side of the Sea-wolf. Half-way up to the middle in water, he kept ejaculating for help, to the great amusement of Tom Leopard; when, before the latter had time to put an oar into a rowlock for the purpose of coming to his assist-

ance, whether by chance or design, whether owing to the inefficacy of the rope to support so great a weight, chains and all, or through some sinister purpose, as was half suspected, in the *honest fellow* who had charge of the helm, the rope slipped over the quarter railing, and if the learned Peter had not struck his fingers convulsively into a seam in the ship's side, he would have gone down like a stone, to edify the mermaids with his predictions; as it was, his fate was delayed but for a few moments. He uttered a wild shriek, as, clinging to the sheathing, his very finger nails bending back, and his countenance convulsed with agony, he cried out, 'Help! help! quick! you *guzzle demundy* fool, Tom Leopard! I am as dead as a door-nail with the head off! heaven! heaven! I am going down by the run like mother Blundell's bucket in the well;—mercy! mercy! on me, a sinner—'old men are twice children,' as the proverb. Fool! fool! to trust to a rope, though hemp has saved many a worthy man from drowning."

"Lay hold of an oar," said Tom Leopard, shooting one over the calm water towards the unfortunate man, "and less of your bawling, Peter! or you'll rouse the ship, and swamp the whole concern."

"He *maun* 'ave leave to speak, who cannot hold his tongue," screamed Peter; "Help! help! mercy! mercy! — a fool's bolt is soon shot — a horse may stumble on four feet — Live, and let live — O commend my blessed soul unto — Young saint, old devil — He'll never be drowned, who is born — O Lord! with nine grits and a gallon of water —" splash went the sea, within almost

an arm's length of the boat. Peter made an ineffectual effort to jump at the floating oar—missed it—waved his hand above his head, and sunk like a plummet. The water rushed over him; a small eddy gurgled for a moment on the spot, a few bubbles, one after another, rose to the surface; the ripple died away as it ran along the side of the vessel, and the sea was without a vestige of the event.

“Who's fool now, fellow!” shouted the Leopard. “Served him right; should have catched the oar like a man, and not hung squirming like a bat nailed to a barn-door, with a noise and a buzz, enough to rouse all the neighbours.”

Ere he had concluded, Peter's old straw hat rose to the surface of the water, probably disengaged from his head during his struggle in his descent. Tom Leopard eagerly seized it, and dripping as it was, clapped it on his own bushy cranium, as the first and last legacy of his ancient crony; then gazing stupidly on the unbroken smoothness of the sea, under which Peter had vanished, so swift was his descent; he muttered aloud, “He's gone! poor—old—Peter.” A shout from the helm, prolonged by a loud outcry from below, called off the attention of Handspike and his comrades from a commiseration of Peter's fate, to a certainty of their own danger. A dozen dark and menacing forms, in the dim and now partially clouded moonlight, rushed like shadows from the hatchways, to the gangways, and quarters of the ship; all appeared to be outcry, alarm, and confusion; men, scarcely awake, had started from their different berths, and with their minds filled with

vague ideas of danger, imagined that the foe was upon them, or that some new mutiny was about to give their decks to slaughter and confusion.

The first impulse of the fugitives was to regain the floating oar, the next, to pull away desperately from under the quarter of the Sea-wolf. A moment later, and all would have been lost: half a dozen grappling irons splashed in the water, scarcely a foot from the stern of the little boat, as she shot off across the smooth and motionless sea.

“The honest fellow at the helm, might have given us more law, ere he aroused the bloodhounds to so hot a chace,” muttered Handspike.

“He was a bit flurried, I judge,” said the Leopard coolly.

“A devil of a noise it was, that our poor old friend made by splashing in the water—not that I mean to say anything against Peter, now that he’s gone, for ghosts, I’m told, are pretty spiteful.”

“Poor old Peter!” continued the Leopard, “he was always fond of a row.—Brought up in a smithy, and got his *edification* among the sledge hammers; then turned knife grinder, wandered over the shires, and whizzed an old grindstone round oftener in an hour, than the wheel of a mail coach turns in a dozen nights; got to be gunner at last aboard the *Talavery*; fired away for hours together, until he made the boatswain as deaf as a ramrod; poor old Peter!—sad hand at talking—terrible fellow for the brandy bottle—good job for us that he’s gone, or we should soon be run out of the needfullest thing that ever was invented.”

“Hang me! you look pale, lass!” said old Gull

to Maria, “take a cup of this, lass, to cheer up the cockles of your heart;” then administering a strong potion to himself, he handed the bottle to Maria Woodville, putting his finger on a mark in the flask, to signify that she was not to drink more than about two thirds of its contents. The proffered liquor was refused, much, apparently, to the satisfaction of Tom Leopard, who had watched with great anxiety the result of old Gull’s recommendation.

“Who’s fool now, fellow!” he said, unable to restrain his impatience, as the latter resumed his request: “You had better keep the liquor till an honest fellow like myself wants a drop; a dozen hours’ hard pulling will take the pluck out of any man—can’t you be putting the cork in, and leave off enticing the girl, against her interest and inclinations.—Never mind them, miss, I’ll give you a bit of a sea-song myself, by and bye, to keep your spirits up; don’t be afraid; stout fellows all of us, and pull like devils—Sea-wolf never catch us again.”

“The boat!” screamed Maria Woodville, as starting up from her seat on the sternmost thwart, she pointed in silent agony across the sea, in the direction of the schooner.

“By heaven!” shouted Handspike, “they are getting out the launch; Now! now she is in the water! six! eight! nay, a dozen hands are aboard of her, and we are lost!”

“Pull away!” cried the Leopard. Then addressing Handspike, he said, “Who’s fool now, fellow! look to the helm, and don’t stand gaping over the

sea ; stout fellows like us,— can't row, unless the boat be steady ; pull away, old Gull, pull away, like—devils."

" Huzza ! my boys !" said old Gull, though light and ineffectual was the touch, that he now gave to the oar. The Leopard turning round, opened his large eyes upon his companion at the stroke oar, and surveyed him for a few moments in mute astonishment.

The cheek of Maria Woodville blanched to still paler hue ; and Handspike, starting up from his seat, with a menacing voice, exclaimed, " By heaven ! we are not now to be trifled with or betrayed ! Surrender the oar, John Gull, or use it like a man — the enemy are already pushing off ! delay is death ! pull again, John Gull !" Far from complying with this request, the person thus emphatically addressed, coolly threw his oar out of the rowlock. The boat swung directly round, with her head towards the Sea-wolf, under the impetus which she had received from the exertion of Tom Leopard, who was pulling away on the other side, with all the fury which fear could inspire. This was maddening. The Leopard's eyes glistened ; he meditated a spring at the throat of his treacherous comrade. Maria Woodville grasped the gunwale of the boat, with a gesture not to be mistaken : Handspike poured at random some powder out of a wine bottle down the barrel of a pistol, rammed a bit of cork in upon it, and seizing a small bag, which contained some bullets, fiercely placed the cord with which it was tied between his teeth, and endeavoured to tear it asunder.

“ ‘Vast there, comrades !’ said Old Gull, who saw that the aspect of affairs was not a little serious. “ You are a big fool, Tom Leopard, and a dull wit for any thing out of your own line ; and you, Handspike, no better : hang me ! if I care for your rusty iron — hold off, I say !”

“ You have betrayed us !” shouted the steersman.

“ You shall die !” said the Leopard — “ Fire ! fire ! while I hold him, Handspike ! take care to miss me ; hit him about midships, and we’ll tumble him over the gunwale to look after old Peter.”

“ Hold there, I say !” said old Gull, really alarmed ; — “ comrades, what do you mean ? — am I not one of you, and a stout fellow, and we all make three ? Hold off a minute, I say ; the plot thickens, and, hang me ! if I be quite so great a knave as I have the credit for : look there !” and he raised two of his stumpy fingers towards the Sea-wolf. An exclamation of surprise burst from the lips of the two men. “ Betray ye !” resumed Gull — “ hang me ! the pirates’ boat is down to her gunwale in water already ; the fools ! they are scrambling out of her faster than they got in. ‘ Old birds are not caught with chaff,’ as the dear departed Peter once said, when he chopped away a keg of brandy for a bit of *bacch* no bigger than his fist. Betray ye ? — I wasn’t going to sea in a skiff, without securing the long-boat ; so I started a plank with a crow-bar, scored her along the garboard strake with a hatchet. Hang me ! it’s a hard thing if one can’t stop a moment ; to see how one’s

handy-craft answers, and the devil of a fume that it has put the fellows in."

"I think I can hear something like swearing," said the Leopard.

"Think! mountebank," said old Gull, with a sneer—"what, don't ye know it when ye hear it? Their boat's full of water already; it will take half an hour to haul her out; twice the time before old Sam the carpenter can rap her planks together, and stop her leaks; hang me! it wasn't badly done, was it?" and, pulling off his cap, he gave his bald head a patronising sort of a tap.

"A devilish clever fellow you are, old Gull; like myself, only a bit too severe to your friends. Shouldn't like to be obliged to cast you over the gunwale,—thought I must do it though," said the Leopard.

"The man is not yet christened who can do that," said his companion, rather surlily.

"Who's fool now, fellow! that's me," said the Leopard;—"I was picked up on a lee-shore in a north wind; never had a finger across my forehead in all my life; got sprinkled with spray though, often enough.—Pull away, old Gull," he continued;—"don't drink all the brandy, man; leave us a drop before we go to the next bottle—we shall have the long boat in our wake yet; the wind may spring up, and the Sea-wolf bear down on us."

"Pull away!" said old Gull, roused at the idea of such a contingency: "we are sold then, I judge; they may vamp up that old boat in an hour, and board us yet, ere we touch land." Then

addressing Maria, he said, “ Thank ye, my lass, a little more to starboard — keep the boat steady, and in trim ; there now — off she goes ! catch us if they can — huzza !”

Yielding to the force of her oars, the boat shot swiftly on towards the blue line stretching out in the distance, rapidly leaving the Sea-wolf behind her, and gliding over the calm sea, as upon the smooth bosom of a lake.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A GLOOM of care gathered on the brow of Alexander Woodville, when his daughter returned not at the expected time. He had received intelligence of the departure of the cutter from Ostend; and when, after a lapse of some days, no news arrived of Maria and her companions, he became restless and disturbed.

The fatal tidings of the destruction of the Greyhound at length burst upon him. The crew of a fishing boat having found some fragments of sail marked with the vessel's name, her mast, and a portion of her wreck, her loss became no longer doubtful. They told Alexander Woodville that he was childless. At first he appeared to heed not, nor believe them; it was not possible, though his fears might before this have hinted it, it was not possible, he deemed, that there could be such a trial prepared for his philosophy. Deep was the grief, and wild the consternation of his household, yet none dared betray their emotion in his presence. Paul Mowbray, to whom his young *missress* was ever affectionate and kind, scarcely knew

how to control his grief, or to stand unmoved in the presence of her iron-hearted father.

A cold and chilling desolation seemed to reign within the mansion ; and the lurking signs of suppressed and agonizing grief that prevailed, appeared more terrible than the wildest expression of unavailing sorrow. Each hour did Alexander Woodville appear to grow more stern and fearful. His very countenance became fixed, as though he were each moment upon his guard against some insidious emotion. Yet was there something dreadful in the calmness which he had now assumed ; something apparently unnatural, as though

— “ Like a hand wolf,
He might leap out into his natural wildness,
And do an outrage — ”

as though his philosophy might in a moment forsake him, and each suppressed feeling might revolt with a deadly and desperate energy.

Woodville appeared to employ himself in his usual studies and occupations ; but the watchful eye of the old steward, detected that he would sit for hours, gazing on the unturned page of one of his favourite authors. But the most fearful sign that dismayed his domestics, was the certainty, that though as usual he retired every evening to his chamber, he rested not ; for, in the morning his couch ever appeared unpressed and undisturbed. At length it became necessary, that whether indifferent or not to his daughter's fate, the outward signs of grief should be manifested, the lower windows of the mansion should be closed, and the household arrayed in mourning. With trembling

knees, and a voice, faltering with emotion, Mowbray advanced to hint to his master this new necessity. As he approached the study in which Woodville sat, he felt as though he were about to enter the den, in which some solitary being dwelt apart from his species.

Woodville was there, but his attitude startled and appalled old Mowbray. With his back towards the door, with his right arm extended before him, his hand firmly clenched, and as rigid as though his frame were of iron, he stood motionless and alone.

The approach of Mowbray appeared to arouse him, for he slowly turned his head, and gazed over his shoulder upon the trembling and bewildered intruder: his countenance was deadly pale; he spoke not, but a bitter sneer of contempt seemed to curl on his awful lip. Mowbray would have retired, but it was too late to recede, and making an effort to summon up his strength and courage, with a voice almost inarticulate with grief, he endeavoured to state the purpose of his intrusion, and to solicit the advice of his master, as to what proceedings were necessary, under the deep calamity which had befallen them.

“Who is dead?” at length said Woodville in a whisper, which might have startled the very tenants of the grave.

The old steward stared at his master: he knew him too well, he thought, to deem him a hypocrite; but he knew not how otherwise to interpret his query.

“Who is dead?” repeated Woodville; and he

snatched off a rose from a flower-stand beside him, and crushed it in his hand.

“The best and most affectionate of beings,” said old Mowbray, giving way to his grief, and sinking on his knees before his master; “your daughter! your daughter! Miss Woodville!”

“Begone, fool!” said the father, “are you not my steward? and must I be thus insulted in my own hall, by your wild and unavailing passion? Begone, sir! you are not loyal!”

“Not loyal! my best exertions have ever been devoted to your service; I came but to ask, sir, if the usual signs of respect — ”

“Respect!” he said, “respect! to my dead girl! my Maria! Does the false, the grinning, the hollow-hearted world demand *that* of me? Begone, sir! I care not what ye do. Deck out my household in purple and in scarlet, an ye will — close up, bar up every window, that not a stray gleam of light may come in — weep like women — howl like beaten dogs. Keep out of my way — let me not see it — let me not hear it — I would be calm — I would be quiet — I will be yet unconquered — unsubdued in spite of your mummery. Begone! I will be alone.”

Alarmed at the strange conduct and unusual vehemence of his master, the old man withdrew.

On the evening of the same day, Woodville was seated by the fire, in one of the gloomy apartments of the most antiquated portion of the mansion. Some books lay open before him, while a small lamp shed a dim and uncertain light around. There had been a miniature in this room, of Maria

Woodville, but the painting had lately been cut out and taken away, and when Paul Mowbray entered, to receive the usual orders from his master for the following day, he observed that Woodville was gazing with such intensesse on the vacant frame of the picture, that he was not for some time aware of his presence. At length, with a voice softened and subdued, he said,—“Mowbray! I have a favour to request of you.” The old steward stared, but answered not. “You must sit up with me to-night; I am not well.” The individual thus addressed, expressed his willingness to comply, although he could not help thinking, that as this was the first night that he had slept out of his apartment in the rectangular tower for the last thirty years, no great good could come of such irregular proceedings.

The philosopher then appeared to apply himself to his books, and having signified that it was his intention to pass the night in his studies, in the room in which they were, Mowbray, to keep himself awake, and counteract any evil which might occur from his changing his quarters, drew out a small Testament from his pocket, and diligently applied himself to its perusal.

As the time wore on, though it was yet early in the evening, he could not help stealing an occasional glance at his master.

There was an alteration in his countenance, which could not fail to awaken the attention of his veteran domestic—his under-lip had fallen, his eye was dim and glassy; he appeared, instead of perusing the work before him, to be learning it by heart, for he never turned the page.

There was something awful in that dimly-lighted apartment, in the death-like stillness that prevailed in it, and the companionship of such a being, that filled the old man with dread.

Quicker and quicker were the regards of the dependant turned towards his master. Still Woodville sat unmoved, affording a strange subject for the artist's pencil, as the light fell on his long white locks, which hung over a lofty brow, as he still sat erect, and as if in deep meditation on the book before him: the solitary lamp casting his shadow against the wall, while, from the same cause, his arm darkened the greater part of the page, which he was apparently perusing.

The low mouldering fire occasionally shot a fitful gleam, the reflection of which lit up Woodville's pale forehead with a dazzling whiteness.

As the monk mutters quicker his prayers, and tells more speedily his beads, if danger be at hand, so the old steward, as his fears and apprehensions became excited, read faster and faster the holy book before him, gradually raising his voice, until every word was audible in the room. He had commenced aloud the eighth chapter of St. Luke; and when he came to the words, "She is not dead, but sleepeth"—Woodville, starting up, shouted out—

"She is not dead, but sleepeth! see you prove that!—she was here but now, my sweet, my loved Maria! I felt her warm breath against my cheek, her light touch upon my arm; saw her blue eyes; they were full of tears, though; she spoke to me, but her voice was mellowed by sorrow—and she pitied me! see you mock me not!—No trifling with an old man, three-score and seven! My dead

girl! my fond! my affectionate! my beautiful Maria! Say you, she does but sleep? Sleep is death, and death is sleep in your theology! away then—thank heaven, there is no mockery—no murmuring over her grave—see ye prove that she does but sleep!"

Relapsing into his former position, he was, in another moment, as still and unanimated as ever. The old steward watched the countenance of his master; and, with increased anxiety, remarked, that his head now bent down to his book, and his stern grey eye wandered in vacancy.

Paul Mowbray would have fled and left him, had not a strong sense of duty and attachment bound him to the spot. He moved as though he would speak of comfort, but the words died upon his tongue ere they had utterance; and he did but sit gazing upon the master whom he had served so long and faithfully.

Another long interval elapsed; at length Woodville slightly moved, turned over a page of his book, then slowly and deliberately closing the volume, he fastened down its brass clasps, one by one, for it was an old-fashioned work; he then moved his hand towards the lamp; it trembled violently for a moment, and then extinguished the light.

"Would you rest?" asked Mowbray.

"Soon!" replied Woodville, in a hollow voice, and he lay back in his chair.

Each moment appeared to his companion to become more awful, and in his nervous excitement, the slightest sound seemed to have a fearful distinctness, for he heard the clicking of an old clock

in a distant apartment, and every stroke seemed to beat against his heart.

Woodville raised himself again, fixing his eyes upon his steward for some time, as if he would speak ; then, after an apparent struggle, in a voice nearly as powerful and strong as ever, he said,—

“Leave me, Mowbray, leave me ; I would die alone.”

The poor old man, too terrified to reply, knew that it was not his duty to obey ; but muttering occasionally a prayer between his lips, sat looking, now on the red embers of the fire, now on the apparently calm, yet pale countenance of his master.

He wished to relight the lamp ; but Alexander Woodville appeared in a mood too terrible to be trifled with. The wildest burst of unavailing sorrow, thought Mowbray to himself, would be more tolerable, than the calm, death-like, yet perfidious tranquillity, which seemed impressed on the countenance and form of the stern old father. He thought to cast himself upon his knees by his master, and see what the fervour of his attachment, or the earnestness of his prayers might avail ; but Woodville was now gazing sternly at him, as, with a reproachful look, he appeared to rebuke him for disobedience to his last command.

At this moment, a servant entered the apartment, and addressing the steward, said, in a low voice,

“She is coming ! she is coming !”

“Who ?” asked the father.

“Miss Woodville !”

The old man started up, clasped his hands to-

gether ; then convulsively pressing them before his eyes, reseated himself as rapidly ; and resting his head upon the table, continued thus for many minutes.

After a considerable lapse of time, his attendants sought to arouse him. Amid the strong, fierce battling against human emotion, in the desperate adherence to a stern and bitter creed, the spirit of the man had exorcised that of the philosopher ; and in the struggle a brave though mistaken heart was broken.

CHAPTER XXVII.

It might be two hours after midnight, when the moon went down into the ocean, and every object, even the dusky shadow of the distant shore, became lost in obscurity.

The sky was overcast, and there was no longer any visible star to guide the fugitives on their way. Unwillingly, at last, were the oars thrown out of the rowlocks, and, weary with their exertion, old Gull and the Leopard wrapped their cloaks about them, and were soon forgetful of all their cares and labours.

Handspike, too, though far more deeply interested in the fate of Maria Woodville, now unconsciously relinquished the tiller of the boat, and nodded in companionship with his comrades.

Maria Woodville slept not; her eyes were the only watchful ones beneath the gloom of that dull sky, which now overshadowed the water, and hid from her longing sight those shores where at last she hoped to find protection. Then she thought of her companions—could she trust or confide in *them*? More than one suspicious word had al-

ready fallen from their lips ; their commiseration of her fate appeared too sudden to be pure, and, when she called up the memory of their deeds, she shuddered at the very thought of their companionship in such an hour.

Alone, the only wakeful one in that drifting boat, with many a thought on her dead lover, and on that stern philosopher at home, to whom she was wont to lisp the name of father; there did she sit; her long dark lashes glittering with tears, as with her cheek resting on her hand, and her neck bowed in humility and prayer, she seemed like an exiled being from another and a better world.

Darkness had covered the deep, but the low and multitudinous voice of the waters hummed around her—she started, as a murmur of the sea sounded louder on her ear; and she perceived the boat to be rocked almost rudely on the waters. The wind was rising ! In another instant she thought to hear the cry of her pursuers, and to hold the Sea-wolf towering from the gloom with her tall canvas and shouting crew.

She closed her eyes, and, shortly afterwards, felt a light touch upon her arm, and a ruder one upon her hand, as a diamond ring, containing some of her mother's hair, was wrested from her finger. She would have resisted, but she feared there might be more danger in appearing conscious of the delinquent's proceeding than in quietly yielding to his avarice.

Scarcely was the little bark of the fugitives lost in the gloom of the evening, before their pursuers were in full and rapid progress towards the shore ; determined, should they not meet with Handspike

and his comrades in their way, to be ready to intercept their flight as soon as the first dawn should favour their intention.

“ Clever fellow, that Tom Leopard,” said Mike Cleaver to the old boatswain of the Sea-wolf, who had the helm of the pursuing boat; — “ never thought though, that he and old Gull had half gumption enough to give us the slip in the way they did.”

“ Queerish night this,” said the boatswain, not heeding the remarks of his companion; — “ tell that wooden-legged fool a-head there, not to wriggle about on the thwarts. Swamp me, comrades! he’ll stump his timber leg through one of those planks, where old Gull made so free with his hatchet, and sink us all.”

“ ’Strikes me, not much fit for squalls, this boat; one need walk as tender on board of her as a cat upon ice of a May morning. Don’t you think,” continued Mike Cleaver, endeavouring to gain the boatswain’s attention — “ don’t you think that those gentlemen afore there ought to show cause why they don’t grease their rowlocks? Such a noise has no music in it, and is clearly enough a nuisance, indictable at Sessions.”

“ ’Strikes me somehow, there’s a fool aboard this boat,” said the boatswain.

“ Stop his grog, swear to it!” replied Mike.

“ Light a-head!” cried one of the boatmen. An appearance like the reflection of a lamp was seen swaying backwards and forwards, as if from the motion of a boat at some little distance. “ Look to it now! — ’strikes me we have them — swear for it, my boys! not a word, not a whisper, loud

enough to awaken a mouse. Twist some tow round your oars — muffle them — get the grapping ready — we'll bring the young lady aboard, with a kiss too in the bargain, for our trouble in looking after her this cold night. Ho, there ! no telling, you know, lads ! — easy your oars, and pull as gently as though ye were creeping through a flock of sleeping wild geese in the fens of Lincolnshire."

Softly, with not a murmur among her crew, and the ripple round her bow scarcely to be heard at five yards' distance, the treacherous boat stole in the direction of the light. The night was so dark that no object could be discerned three boats' length a-head ; yet already the indistinct form of the little bark of the fugitives was rising into view, as the glare of the lamp fell suddenly on the sleeping forms of the seamen.

" Give me the grapping," said the boatswain.

" Stay ! you may injure the poor girl," said one of his more tender-hearted comrades ; " another pull, and we are right aboard of them."

" The grapping, fool ;" cried the steersman, in anger ; and stepping to the head of the boat, he drew back his right arm. A moment after was heard the splash of the iron in the sea. Muttering an oath at his want of skill, he drew in the line, and, with more precision, succeeded, in a second attempt, in fastening the iron hook in some part of the boat. The pirates gave a shout of triumph, then quickly hauling in the cord, were about to rush upon their victims, when a pistol flashed in the boatswain's eyes, the lamp was dashed into the sea, and in the confusion the grapping line slipped

through his hand. The two boats were in a moment disengaged.

"Pull away!" shouted Old Gull.

"Like devils," answered the Leopard, starting from his sleep.

Half-a-dozen oars splashed into the water at the same moment; but before the launch could put about in pursuit, the boat was again invisible in the gloom.

"Sharp work this, fellows," said the Leopard, as he wrenched out the grapping iron from the thwart upon which he sat, to which it had pinned him down, by part of his full and easy-fitting trowsers.

"Hang me!" said Old Gull; "never thought they would have vamped up that old boat so soon; no accounting for accidents, though. Old Sam's a clever lad — bit of a relation to myself; poor plan, though, sticking up that lamp, in hopes of being picked up by a herring-buss; stood a queerish chance of being made a whiting of at the yard-arm of the Sea-wolf — pull away!"

"Which way? who's fool now?" said the Leopard; "we may run under the guns of the Sea-wolf, or board the launch in a hurry; keep a sharp look out astern, Handspike, and — hand us the brandy."

After consoling himself pretty well with his favourite liquor, he handed the bottle to his companion, who having done equal justice to its merits, took both the oars, and pulled away steadily for an hour or two, in the supposed direction of the land.

The first grey streak of morning was never

watched with a greater intensity of feeling than that evinced by Maria Woodville: gently it appeared to flush the distant waves, and slowly, to her fixed gaze, the dark and dusky features of her companions rose into distinctness; then the little boat seemed separated from the element around her, and the white curl of some distant wave startled her, lest it might be the ripple from the bow of the pirate's boat.

"Land!" shouted Handspike; Maria Woodville clasped her hands together, and thought that she could now perceive the dark and clouded shore. It was no delusion; nor had the boatman mistaken the direction of the coast, since they were now much nearer to it than when it was last visible.

"Pull away!" shouted the crew, "for life and liberty."

"And pardon and reward," murmured Maria Woodville.

Brighter and yet brighter grew the sea; there seemed something like life, and gladness, and hope, as the fresh breeze fanned her cheek, and the waters sparkled in the light. Yet fearfully did the eye of the young maiden wander over each extending line of vision: at last, like some sullen and gloomy shade, with her cloudlike canvas wrapped around her, the Sea-wolf rose to view. She appeared still to be motionless, and at too great a distance to afford any apprehension to the fugitives. But at the same moment almost, with her lug sail set, and the assistance of six oars, the pirate's launch was to be seen bearing down in the wake of the little boat. "Pull away!" was now echoed by each of

Maria Woodville's protectors frantically enough; then not a murmur burst from their lips; not a sound was heard but the gush of the ripple round the bow, the quick measured stroke of the oars, and the deep breathing of the men.

Despair seemed to animate them with new strength, and the little boat almost flew beneath the exertions of her conductors. Not less swift came on the launch of the pirates; her dark length lurching over the summits of the waves, the light flashing from her sides as every oar at the same instant rose or plunged into the sea, while the fierce shouts of her savage crew, were sufficient to paralyze the efforts of men of less courage than those whom they now pursued.

An occasional interjection from the pale lips of Maria Woodville, or a low and sullen oath from Handspike, as he loaded and primed his pistols and clenched his cutlass in his hand, were the only answers breathed back by the fugitives to the savage yells of their pursuers.

The shore appeared wild and desolate; not the vestige of a house or a shed to be distinguished, in the low line of beach and shingle, as far as the eye could reach. On one spot, a few, perhaps half-a-dozen, fishermen were assembled, apparently too much engaged in stretching out their nets to dry in the sun, to pay any attention to the chase.

“Give them a shot — the pirates — fire!” muttered the Leopard, as almost choked with his exertion, he marked their rapid approach.

“Not yet! — not yet! — the shore!” shouted the helmsman, to stimulate the ardour of his comrades.”

“ ‘Tis terrible!” muttered Maria Woodville.
“ On! — on! — for your lives!”

A solitary horseman was now seen galloping along the beach, with slackened rein and uplifted hand urging, with desperate haste, his horse to the spot where the boats would probably land.

“ Strike! surrender! or die!” shouted a dozen voices, as the bow of the launch struck against the quarter of the little boat.

“ Strike! — surrender! or we fire!” and at the instant both boats crashing together, were driven upon the beach.

A yell of exultation — the report of fire-arms — the splashing of water, and the shadows of a dozen dusky forms, leaping like savages upon the strand, between her and the sun, were all that Maria Woodville heard or saw, in that moment of despair and terror; and the next few minutes were those of unconsciousness. She opened her eyes, and with returning consciousness, beheld the Leopard stretched at her feet, pale as death, his forehead gashed with a sabre, and his right hand, upon one finger of which glittered her ring, clenched in his flowing hair. A man in a dark mask, with a smoking pistol in his hand, grasped her round the waist.

At a few paces off stood Handspike and old Gull, surrounded by the fishermen, and disarmed.

There were then, words of altercation between the fishermen and the boat’s crew, as though the former seemed gathering courage to dispute the measures and violence of the captors. But at this moment the group around her opened and shouted,

as a horse and his rider plunged into the midst, and dashed the sand and shingle high over the heads of the party.

“Mine! and mine only!” shouted a voice, which thrilled to the very heart of Maria Woodville, as Herbert, felling her detainer upon the beach, clasped her in his arms.

Sudden was the panic which seized upon the smugglers; some flew to their boat, others dispersed along the beach, but the old boatswain and two others, retreating a few paces, appeared to meditate resistance or attack. Again was the wildest terror depicted in their countenances; they thought that in the person of Herbert, they beheld a spirit from the dead to call them to account for their crimes. But there was another cause for flight and apprehension at hand. Stealing along the shore, until this moment unperceived, a man-of-war’s boat was seen, rapidly approaching the spot where the pirates had so lately been gathered. She was apparently well armed and manned, and had, in all probability, been concealed in some creek at no great distance.

The waving handkerchief which Herbert raised above his head, was answered by a loud cheer from his men. A quick succession of shots along the beach, told that Herbert’s men had landed, and were in pursuit of the astonished smugglers, who, beholding all retreat cut off by sea, were endeavouring to make their escape in various directions up the country.

“Traitor!— perfidious traitor! yield or die!” said Herbert, planting his foot upon the breast of

his fallen foe, and waving his cutlass above his head.

“Spare my life!—I will surrender!” was the reply, breathed in a feeble and imploring voice, and, as his mask fell off, Herbert beheld, not the individual whom in that moment of exultation he deemed was in his power, but one of his own men, who, some months before, had deserted his former station and joined the bands of the smuggler.

With the assistance of Handspike, old Gull, and two or three of the fishermen, the unhappy and dying Leopard was raised from the beach and borne away towards the nearest hamlet.

Herbert gave his horse in charge to one of his men, and urging the remainder in pursuit of the dispersed and flying pirates, he turned to Maria Woodville, that he might conduct her to some place of rest and safety. But she moved not from the spot; she seemed to stand as if unconscious of all around her, gazing one moment in the countenance of her lover, though she deemed his existence but a phantom; then pointing over the waves, and muttering to herself the name of the far-off vessel which now appeared to be rapidly bearing out to sea. She started from her lover's side as though she knew him not, and yet her gaze returned with the same intensity to the object from whom she had fled so timidly, she said, “Pray do not mock me or betray me! I am a fond and foolish girl, and fear what I have suffered may have turned my brain!—See there!—that phantom-ship is melting away like a cloud!—and her crew?—are they gone?—are they gone?—Speak, I

implore thee! — Art thou not Henry Herbert? — Herbert! whom I saw perish in the waves before mine eyes, when the Sea-wolf bore down upon our bark, and all! all! were lost but me!"

" Maria," exclaimed Herbert, and he knelt beside her on the beach. The charm was broken, the spell was disenthralled; supported by his arm, and resting her head upon his shoulder, while her tears fell fast, the orphan girl felt that she was saved, and that all she now loved on earth was in safety by her side. But not to her alone did the escape of Herbert appear miraculous. Handspike and old Gull could hardly believe their senses, or trust in the identity of the form they now beheld.

When the Leopard and his companions went forth from the Sea-wolf to perform the stern injunction of their chieftain, and beheld the remnant of the crew of the Greyhound, clinging desperately for life to the apparently sinking boat; their hearts relented, and they returned without the performance of their mission, trusting that the increased darkness of the hour, and their own duplicity in washing the rusty sabre in the sea, would lull the suspicions of their commander. Yet they never doubted for a moment, of the certainty of Herbert's death,—but it was otherwise decreed. A few minutes after the pirate's boat had returned, the mast of the cutter, with part of her deck, rose to the surface of the water, close to the scarcely floating boat. As the last effort of despair, Herbert and his companions succeeded, by the means of the ropes and tackling of the mast, in connecting the whole

of the floating fabric together, so as to form a kind of raft, to which they lashed themselves, under the hopes that, with the morning light, they might be perceived and rescued by some passing ship. It was a faint and desperate hope, and as they saw the dark shadow of the Sea-wolf flitting far away, and leaving them to their fate, each man according to his disposition, sent a prayer or a curse over the waters, and turning towards his companions, prepared himself to die. Morning came, and with it a bright and cloudless sky, and a calm sea unbroken by a sail. One by one, the crew dropped into the deep and died, or else perished in the coils of the wet rope which they had twisted round them. But ere the day was spent, and while Herbert and another yet survived, a shout rang on the ears of the scarcely conscious seamen ; the large sail of a coasting bark flapped over them, and a dozen joyous voices told them at once, that they were rescued men.

Herbert landed on the neighbouring coast, regretting when he thought of the desolation of his hopes, that he had outlived all that was dear and consecrated to him in this world ; and almost cursing the chance which gave him back to life. The Sea-wolf had been observed hovering along the coast ; communications had been addressed to the various ports, and active measures taken for her capture, when Herbert, as he rode down to the beach, to embark on board the boat of the Medusa, which was expected every hour to anchor in the neighbouring roads, perceived the launch of the Sea-wolf in furious chase of a little boat, in which he already descried the form of his lovely Maria.

One and one only shade was there to darken the joy of Herbert, as, retiring with Maria Woodville from the beach, he beheld the shadowy form of the Sea-wolf, with her cloud-like canvas, melting away in the horizon, as the vessel of the pirate stood to sea, seemingly, exulting and unsubdued.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE distance of the Sea-wolf from shore, was too considerable to allow her commander to judge correctly of the events which had recently taken place. Yet, from the best observation that he could make, he felt assured, that the fugitives had escaped, and that the crew of the launch were either dispersed or taken. Yet he continued hovering off the land with a strange infatuation, in defiance of the entreaties of his crew, and of every suggestion of his own prudence.

As the night closed in, he again approached the shore, near the spot where the launch had landed, in the hope that he might learn the particulars of the events of the morning.

He was, therefore, not much surprised when, as he paced the deck of his vessel a few hours before sunrise, he heard himself addressed by name, and, immediately after, beheld the boatswain and two others of his ship's crew, clamber up the vessel's side from out of a dredging smack, the owners of which, through old acquaintance sake, had consented to give them a free passage, until the heat

of the pursuit had in some manner abated. Their return brought with it little satisfaction to Falconer, when he heard from their lips a recital of the proceedings of the chase, coupled with the assurance, that in all probability the whole of his boat's crew were either slain or captured. At the same time, they earnestly besought their commander to quit with all speed, not only that shore, but the British Channel itself; since, from the information which they had picked up from their companions, there could be but little doubt that the sea would swarm with cruisers to intercept their flight in every direction.

Falconer heard the boatswain's clear and distinct account of the escape of the fugitives; but when he spoke of the unaccountable appearance of Herbert, and the sudden panic that his presence had produced, he believed not that his rival lived, but that the veteran seaman, in the surprise and confusion of the moment, had laboured under some strange and mysterious delusion. Yet was there a wildness in the gesture with which the smuggler questioned his subordinate upon the subject;—so much so, that confused, and not a little irritated by the numerous queries of his captain, the boatswain exclaimed, at last, rather sulkily—

“ Well, well, be it so—the whole affair was but the twinkling of an eye—dare say, that it was a delusion; would swear anyway; it was an apparition; or, at all events, no better than a ghost. 'Strikes me, somehow, Sea-wolf's crew fairly bothered of late—what with prophets and mock trials, and petticoats! Got knocked up by old Sam, the carpenter, out of the only sleep one

had for these three nights, to get on board a rotten boat, and give chase to a lass who didn't know when she was well off — hang her! that's all an honest fellow gets for fishing up her and her muslins out of the sea. No one knows where she drifted from ; that's what gets over me ; no wonder we had ghosts and prophets, and them there gimcracks ; what with one botheration and another, hardly knows one's right hand from one's left, or the jib-boom from the mizen-peak." So saying, he walked sulkily away ; but recovering, a few minutes after, part of his good humour, he returned, to give his commander some important advice, as he deemed, under present circumstances.

" 'Strikes me, somehow, if an old man may be allowed to speak, captain, we ought to get our running-tackle on board, and scud before the first breeze that offers ; else we shall find it no easy task to get out of the clutches of the craft that will be in our wake ere morning. Good boat, the Sea-wolf — stout fellow, myself — brave chap for a captain — fight ! while we've a plank to stand on, or a match to lay to the priming of our guns ! yet can't do everything, I take it ; some impossibilities which the biggest heroes never get over — the sooner we sheer off, the better ; the morning-light is already creeping up the sky ; and a fellow less timid than myself might fancy yon fleecy clouds in the offing to be the top-gallants sails and royals of a dozen tall ships, bearing down to take some of the fun out of the most knowing of us : the shore, too, looks as gloomy as Gibbet Point, and as black and as barren, as though it were only fit for revenue-cutters and the devil himself to cruise off."

In another instant, the well-known summons, “ All hands on deck !” sounded through the vessel ; and, as her scanty crew started one by one from their hammocks, the Sea-wolf appeared to awaken from the almost motionless position in which she had been lying, steadied by a jib and topsail ; and when, fold after fold of her white canvass fell from the yards, she seemed suddenly to bound away like a racehorse, urged on by a light hand and slackened rein.

And now ! for a new world among the rich and spicy shores of the east ! thought her crew, as they beheld her bows dashing aside the bright and sparkling waters.

“ What a moaning the wind makes through the shrouds and cordage,” said the boatswain to a sailor close beside him ; “ the breeze can scarcely be called a stiff one ; and yet it sways our ropes and rigging about, as though it were a tornado. ’Strikes me, somehow, that old chap they call the Prophet did no good to our ship : — I don’t half like it, comrade.”

“ Nor I, either,” said his companion ; “ our captain has been mad melancholy ever since.”

It might be doubtful whether Falconer heard this conversation, so low was the tone in which it was addressed ; but he appeared suddenly to start from his reverie ; and, after striding once or twice hastily across the deck, he said aloud —

“ Hastings ! bring up the prisoner !”

An expression of surprise and curiosity burst from the lips of the bystanders : in a short time the clank of fetters was heard upon deck, and Campbell stood among them. “ Release him ! yet

him free!" then, approaching his former comrade, Falconer exclaimed, "Campbell, I have wronged you! I do not say this that I may mitigate any hostile feeling you may bear towards me, or win one friend from a world against which I have declared war! You have been the companion of many an adventure — the partaker of many a peril — yet you knew me not! you could not judge of my purposes, nor fathom the depths of my hate! and I laughed to scorn the intention which placed a sword in your hand that you might slay me. I bear a charmed life above even your hate, or your purposes, or the designs of those around me, lurked there a traitor among my crew. Saw you not how *we* battled it with the storm — I and *he*! the Prophet of the Bell? But I forbore to make you the confidant of my designs! Say you forgive me, Campbell? you are at liberty to take the joint command of the ship with myself, where the wind and waves may waft us, or to return whither you please, on the deck of the first friendly bark we meet with."

"I am not free yet!" said Campbell, as he motioned to a sailor, who was assisting him, to expedite the operation of relieving him from his fetters. "And now, a cutlass! and my pistols! and I will answer you."

Falconer gazed doubtfully at the Highlander, hesitated, and then ordered a sword and fire-arms to be placed in the hands of his late mutinous companion.

"I will be your friend, Falconer! and, if ever I become your foe, it shall be an open and avowed one! I knew not, when you called me upon deck,

but that I was to hear my sentence pronounced, and to die before your eyes — perhaps it is as well otherwise : to swing at the yard-arm were not the best exit for the descendant of a noble house ; nothing less than beheading would sound well in the family pedigree. So I will e'en turn pirate for form's sake — trust to a run of good luck and old age to get into some sunny cove at last — spend the remainder of my days in peace and repentance, and die in a manner truly edifying to those who may inherit my name and virtues !”

A murmur like a suppressed laugh went round among the crew. Falconer, long as he had known his former comrade, could hardly help resenting the tone of raillery in which he spoke, and almost repented that he had granted him life and liberty upon such easy terms. But Campbell, either indifferent to, or unconscious of, the feelings which he had excited, placed his pistols in his belt, and, for a minute or two, stood coolly balancing his sword-hilt on his hand ; then, casting a superficial glance over the crew, the deck and rigging of the Sea-wolf, he said —

“ What mean you to do, captain, with a crew found so scanty, and a ship so ill-provided ? — a ragged set of fellows, indeed, to scour the high seas as rovers ! You had a fine cargo once, boatswain — hope it has received no damage during my confinement. In all our skirmishes together, I always respected the silks and cashmeres : but there are hardly men enough on board to hand the sails in a squall, much less to man the guns when we make muster for fighting work !”

“ Strikes me, that's sober truth and reason,”

answered the boatswain ; “ since you were locked up, Master Campbell, we’ve had one or two Emigration Committees on board, and the distressed manufacturers have run off with the boats ; but, thank heaven ! there are lots of fishing-smacks and small craft buzzing about the channel ; we’ll soon lay our wolf’s paw upon a dozen or two of their crews, right our affairs in a hurry, and —”

“ Peace, fellow ! ” said Falconer : then, addressing Campbell, he continued — “ Hold the wind as it does now, a day or two will find us far from the shores of England, and out of the reach of our foes ; we may then easily recruit our numbers from the coast of France, and, by disposing of our light cargo, lay in fresh stores and provisions ; and then, Campbell ! you have a new world before you ; new scenes for enterprise and hope.”

The weather was anything but clear ; a dense fog lay immediately a-head of the Sea-wolf, and the sun shed a dull obscured light ; even the waves themselves looked red and lurid beneath the clouded rays which he threw over them. In a few minutes more, the vessel, entering the fog, swept through the air with her canvas rustling like the wings of a bat, in the thick and clouded atmosphere.

“ Hark ! what was that ? ” said Campbell, “ ‘twas like the grating of a cable ; and there ! — ‘tis the click of the pauls of a windlass.”

“ Nonsense ! — I hear nothing,” said the boatswain, “ but the roaring which the wind keeps up aloft there — he’s a melancholy fellow, that wind, and seems to wander about the world as though he were forsaken by every body, and so does all manner of mischief whenever he can ; (Hastings !

the foretop-sail shivers, haul your sheet taughter—) now throwing down a chimney-pot upon a old woman's apple-stall, and now knocking against the rocks the finest ships which art ever put together."

"Who?—Hastings or the wind?" inquired Campbell.

"Port! helm a-lee, for your lives!" shouted Falconer.

The flapping of canvas was heard, as of a vessel heaving in stays; and then, like a tower of white clouds rising from the sea, the form of a large ship seemed to start from the waters bearing the English flag at her mizen-peak. In another minute the Sea-wolf swept under the stern of the Medusa frigate.

The crew of either vessel appeared equally astonished.

"Give way, men! give way!" shouted Falconer. "He is running to his ports!—helm a-lee! hard! harder yet—we shall be out of sight, if not of hearing, ere he has time to take out his tompions and cast loose his guns."

In a few minutes a glare of light was seen through the fog, and one or two guns roared over the water in the direction which the Sea-wolf had taken. But the hull of the frigate had already disappeared, and the shot fell wide of the mark.

"It is a useless waste of powder," said Campbell as he calmly listened to the report of the last gun.

"He must holloa louder than that, and throw his Majesty's balls with a little more precision, ere we haul down our Wolf," added the boatswain.

"Now! a-board to the starboard!—he is run-

ning down before the wind like a mad bull, and with a breeze like this, we shall whistle him many a league apart ere sunset ; a devilish lucky fog !—thanks to the Prophet and our captain !”

But the pirates saw no more of the frigate ; and when, in the afternoon, the weather cleared up, the whole line of vision, to their infinite joy, was unbroken by a speck of land or a sail, large enough to have matched the wing of a sea-mew.

“ She drives bravely through the waters !” said Campbell, “ another night and we shall be quit of our fear of the yard-arm or the press-court at Newgate !”

“ Where should the frigate be now, comrade ?” said the boatswain, while he made an ineffectual attempt to look through his glass.

“ The Medusa ?—Who the devil cares ?” answered Campbell ; “ run into shoal water off ‘ The Lizard,’ or jammed in between Start Point and the Eddystone ; but, surely there is a sail yonder.”

“ Where ?—’strikes me the fog has got into the telescope ; hang it ! every thing looks as black as midnight, and I can about make as good a see of it through this hazy old glass, as though I were to look up a water-pipe.”

“ Sail !—direct a-head !” cried a seaman from the foretop-mast-yard.

“ Sail a-head !—Where ?” said the boatswain. “ I’m glad we’re out of the fog, I thought twenty times of Herbert and the old Prophet, and all the other botheration we’ve had about us since we ran off with the Sea-wolf and the Hollander’s silks and spices ! I feared every moment to see the ghost of the Greyhound cutter, with all her sails set, like

the Flying Dutchman, come squaring up at us, against the wind, like a little bully, to fight us!"

" Make you out aught of the distant sail, Campbell? — a brig or a ship? — by her size I should judge the former."

" He's a fine little fellow," replied Campbell, " and is beating up direct in our path, and, as we are running down to meet him at a spanking pace, no wonder that his hull rises quickly above the water. Ah! now I see his broadside — two masts if I mistake not: had we a couple of dozen more hands on board, and stouter canvas, we might steer boldly up to his bowsprit, and overhaul his bill of lading."

" No, no, away!" said Falconer, " we'll brave it out in some distant sea, and lord it over polaccas, and lateen-rigged barques. We will not stain these waters by another murder; when the very breeze that fans our cheeks, comes off the dear vales of England!"

" Ha! mark you the brig? — she has struck her flag — did you note the ensign?"

" No — It is plain he sees us, and wishes not to be recognized — but it is strange — he was too quick for me in striking his bunting. I judge him British, by his hull and the set of his yards. By St. Paul! he means mischief I reckon, though he opens not his mouth wide enough to give us a view of his teeth."

" Set the top-gallant sails! cheerly, my lads, cheerly! she is far to leeward, and must sail well to haul down on the Sea-wolf, while she breasts the foam at this rate. Well done, my darling! she dashes through the billows, and beats away the

fiercest from her bows, as though she had a patent of nobility to lord it over the channel."

"Amen," said the boatswain, who having left his occupation a-head, came to give his opinion and advice upon the present posture of affairs. "Amen, I say—audibly, and with a clear conscience. A fine boat, the *Sea-wolf*; may no hostile shot ever rattle against her sides, hang her rigging in festoons, or spoil the beauty of her paces,—bless her! she drives through the waters as though she were a Christian, and knew our wishes. Queer-looking sail that—keeps a wide offing, though three masts, with some metal aboard, I'll warrant! from the knowing wink she gave us just now, and the glitter that ran along her deck, as she hooked the wind's eye with her bowsprit, and stood off on her starboard tack."

"Deem ye her intentions hostile?" said Falconer.

"Strikes me that's a point of some nicety—beats up too close to be friendly; 'spose she don't like sailing alone; ships, I take it, like natural creatures, fond of one another's company, were it not for the smoky guns, the different cut of their flags, and the quarrelsome marines on board, who are always talking of fencing, and pitting one brave ship against another for the honour of the navy. But it's all one, and no consequence; a long pull at the can, and away for the Indies, if we escape; short reckoning, no prayers, and the yard-arm, if they catch us."

"Peace, fool!" said Falconer—"give me the glass?—she wears away—ha! but now she means it!" A moment he stood calm and silent, then

glanced fiercely around, as though he would read the thoughts of his small and diminished crew.

"Arm there!" cried Falconer, in another moment—"arm there! they shall have it! rumble the old drum and beat to quarters! make the dogs howl! we will dance to it, though it sound the knell of some of us. The Sea-wolf shall speak with her rough music: a close hug, and an iron grasp if she follow us, that shall leave some scars at parting. But yet, we will try our pursuer's speed and seamanship; we may still part company, without so rough a greeting—haul the wind!" Then came the usual technical commands, "Helm a-lee—set the braces—the lower sheets further aft—helm a port."

As in obedience to these commands, the head of the Sea-wolf came up nearer the wind, and the sea through which she had hitherto been passing easily, struck heavily upon her starboard bows, and buried at times her head and forechannel in the foam. The "oy-e-oy" sung at the hauling of her bowlines, the courses and top-sails were sheeted home; and Falconer, with a smile of satisfaction, watched the progress of his vessel, confident that she was about to distance her pursuer. The superior size and strength of the distant ship, were now rendered manifest to all; her guns were even seen to grin forth from the dark line which ran along her side; and her deck, as she rolled in the sea, appeared covered with the dusky forms of a numerous and watchful crew; yet were her intentions for some time dubious.

Every eye was now turned towards the vessel

under the lee, who, immediately upon perceiving the manœuvre of the Sea-wolf, running close-hauled, until she had the chase direct upon her beam, went upon the starboard tack, continuing this manœuvre every time, when she brought the Sea-wolf, perpendicular to her course upon either board.

In vain the words “closer, closer yet! trim all sharp,” sounded from the lips of the captain, and his subordinates. The insufficiency of the crew of the Sea-wolf, the injury which her sails and rigging had received in the various conflicts on her decks, materially affected her chance of escape, and the pursuing vessel was every moment perceptibly lessening the distance between her and her chase.

“What make you of her now, old man?” said Falconer, gloomily to the boatswain—“you have a clear and skilful eye for a misty view through a rolling sea; bears our new friend a flag or not? or does he scour the broad ocean with no better commission than ourselves?”

“He has no flag! he shows his teeth, though, the dog, and snarls, as if he were bent upon mischief:—a red streak too, beneath his guns, broad enough, to make a less timid man than myself feel awful—a sloop of war! by all that’s holy!—close, closer yet, sir! our only hope lies in hugging the wind,—in a tack or two, we shall have his shot dance upon the water with wings to it.”

“Arm! arm! to quarters! one more fight, another victory! and with light hearts, and a flowing mainsail, away for the rich shores and sparkling sea of Asia!”

With a proud and flashing eye; with a voice, the deep earnestness of whose tones rang clearly and distinctly above the confused sounds around him, of the rush of waters and the clash of arms, Falconer spoke of hope, and victory, and life.

He had burst away from the trancelike spell which appeared to enthrall his spirit, and, as a last duty to the men who now surrounded him, he used every energy to baffle the speed of his pursuer.

In spite of the gale, he would have clothed every yard and stay with canvas, but he felt that the number of his crew was even now insufficient for the most pressing services of his vessel.

“ What make ye now?—she follows us inch by inch, and turn by turn! and see! like a sheet of gold from her crowded deck there goes an orange flag to her mizen peak—hark! the devils shout!”

“ Orange boven!” said the boatswain, “ and see! she runs up another; 'tis the old rag of Holland! what need we fear!”

“ Fear! who dares to prate of fear? we forget fear, when we are armed: and mercy, when they hunt us to bay;—but they cannot mean to pursue us. There is no enmity between the Sea-wolf and the Dutchman!”

“ O, no,” said Campbell, coolly, “ Van Holme and Co., were exceedingly obliged to you, for taking so troublesome a concern off their hands, as their richly laden bark, and having no influence with His High Mightiness of Holland, never thought of soliciting one of his sloops of war to pursue the delinquent: Lalenson and Lauthenloegs, no doubt, were the most forgiving of creatures, and never thought more, if they ever reached port, of the loss

of their command, or the pleasant cruise which you gave them in a small boat in the open sea."

Falconer replied not. The boatswain stood with his hands clenched before him, and his mouth dilated from ear to ear, as though he were in momentary expectation of beholding the smoke of the chaser's guns rise over her bows. He then fixed his eye anxiously upon Falconer, like a dog watching the countenance of his master; cleared his throat, as though he would speak, and rapping his hand down quickly upon the capstan-head, in a husky voice, and a tone altered by emotion, he thus addressed his captain:—

" 'Strikes me somehow, captain—'strikes me forcibly—I'm an old man, and may be allowed to speak; we can't keep up this work many minutes longer; more's the pity, you may say; another tack or so, and the sloop's broadside will rake us at every board—Sea-wolf sails best, going large—only chance left, to run before the wind, take the luck of a broadside in passing, and try to beat him with a flowing sheet.'

"Or fight him first," said Campbell, in a tone, which appeared perfectly reckless, as though he were indifferent alike to his own fate, and that of his companions.

" 'Tis a desperate chance," said Falconer, with affected calmness, "and yet, the only one; we can answer his broadside with our own; and if he cripple us, come hand in hand, lash the two ships together, carry his decks ere he dream of our intention, or find a common grave in the same broad waters."

“ Shall I repeat your orders ?” said Campbell, and he gazed on the countenance of Falconer.

The smuggler threw a hasty glance on the sea, as though he sought to measure every inch of the distance between him and his pursuer, and then nodded in acquiescence.

Again the head of the Sea-wolf swung round swiftly from the wind ; her sails, with loosened tacks and sheets, filled as she went off in her new direction ; the ominous flag at her mast-head pointed over her starboard bow, and, dashing swiftly over the long roll of the sea, the distance between her and her opponent, was growing rapidly less.

Relieved by the easy motion of their vessel before the wind, the crew now rushed to their guns ; and the next few moments were those of deep and anxious preparation, to receive and return the broadside of the sloop-of-war.

“ Up, all hammocks, up !” shouted the boatswain ; and as soon as he beheld this order obeyed, and the bedding of every sailor lashed along the deck — “ Down hatches ! down !” came the well known cry — “ Cast loose your lashings ! run out your guns and prime !”

A wild cheer rose above the roar of waters, and the confused sound of the clash of arms and instruments on deck. Campbell appeared to have cast aside his indifference and his scorn, and, sword in hand, was breathing out encouragement and defiance to the men around him. The topsails of the sloop-of-war were thrown instantly aback ; her mainsail brailed up to the yard, and she became almost stationary upon the waters, as though she

watched the manœuvre of the Sea-wolf, and was doubtful if the latter meant to pass her on her starboard or larboard bow.

The irresolution of his foe did escape not the quick glance of Falconer. The two vessels were now within musket range of each other, and though not a signal or a gun had passed between them, there was enough in the apparent excitement of their crews, the look of defiance which they breathed, and the fearful proximity in which they were ranged, to denote war and contention to the last.

Seizing the wheel for a moment, Falconer threw the head of his vessel nearer the wind, as though he would leave his opponent upon his larboard bow—the sloop-of-war attempted to veer to oppose this movement, and the very rattle of her blocks was heard: the two vessels were close together, and the wave which struck the bow of the one, seemed to roll off along the side of the other.

“Now! now! for the Sea-wolf!” shouted Falconer, “give it them, my merry fellows!—give it them?” and, throwing his vessel up, as he swept, with the velocity of light, within pistol-shot of the mizen-boom of the sloop, he gave the word to fire!

A red light leaped from port to port along the whole line of the Sea-wolf’s guns. The roar of the cannon—the crashing of timber—the ringing of metal, were, in a moment after, echoed by the shrieks of human agony and despair, which seemed prolonged in one wild yell, combining every expression of misery and torture.

“She has felt us!” shouted Campbell, leaping

upon a gun and endeavouring to pierce through the thick smoke which now concealed their opponent from view.

Not a gun answered from the sloop : the smugglers might have deemed that she was driven out of the very seas, were it not that they saw her top-gallants flapping in the air above the smoke, as sail after sail gradually became visible, until the whole of her hull rose darkly from the water.

“ Give way, my men ! give way !” shouted Falconer, exultingly, “ we have the wide world of waters before us, and none but a crippled Highlander to dispute our right to it.”

The voice of triumph and exultation was premature—the smuggler beheld the sloop-of-war directly in his wake, and so close, that it was evident, that a few lurches more upon the sea would bring her bowsprit against the quarter of his vessel. Two guns, loaded with grape-shot, were immediately pointed aft ; but Falconer beheld with wonder, that in spite of her shot-pierced canvas, and the wild ruin with which his broadside had encumbered her deck, the sloop was still superior in speed, to his own weak and flying vessel. The Sea-wolf hauled a point or two upon the wind ; it appeared at one time, as if the sloop-of-war, sweeping under her stern, would have exposed her to the effects of a raking fire, but, in a moment after, gallantly luffing up, with her bow upon the weather-quarter of the smuggler, she was in a parallel line with her chase, while, ere the latter had time to reload her guns, with a simultaneous cheer from her crew, she poured the fire of her heavy ar-

tillery and the musquetry of her tops, upon the deck of the *Sea-wolf*.

When the smoke had partially cleared away, "Campbell! Campbell! support me!" cried Falconer, in a faint voice, and, firing his pistol in the air, he fell back against the bulwark, and sank senseless upon the deck.

"A brave boat, the *Sea-wolf*!" shouted the boatswain, as he urged on his comrades to their guns. "There is one noble fellow gone! — where we all must go: the captain's down — every officer swept away but the Highlander and myself — the mainyard shivered at the slings, some half-a-dozen guns dismounted — the gib-boom trailing in the sea, and the water pouring through the bows! — to your guns! to your guns! *Sea-wolves*!"

"Ha! am I down at last!" said Falconer, in a voice which sounded fearfully amid the roar of battle; then, pointing to the enemy, he cried out, "Have ye not blown her out of the sea yet, my merry devils? Why, ho! there! our *Wolf* looks grimly; his ears are shot away, and scarcely a rib-band of the bunting curls around her mast. Speak to them, Campbell — speak!"

"I will, I will," was the Highlander's reply, as he fell senseless on the deck.

"To your guns, my comrades!" cried the boatswain, waving his hat above his head. "The Highlander is down now: not an officer left but myself, as sound and as hearty as ever, thank Heaven! A brave boat the *Sea-wolf*! though our deck is riddled with balls — our spanker-boom shot away — with three feet water in the hold! we've a dry plank yet to fight on!"

The two vessels were now running in parallel lines, hurling at each other their destructive artillery; while the shrieks of the wounded and yells of the combatants, made them appear as if peopled by evil spirits, waging a war of hate and extermination. But, though nothing could equal the bravery, or the savage despair of the crew of the Sea-wolf, the heavier metal of the sloop-of-war told fearfully to their disadvantage, and they were every minute becoming less capable of resistance, less able to inflict injury upon their opponents.

The distance between the two vessels now rapidly decreased: the temporary commander of the Sea-wolf, aware of the feeble and exhausted state of his crew, used every effort to prevent the sloop-of-war from running her a-board. In vain the boatswain hauled closer to the wind; owing to the disabled state of his vessel, her opponent beat her at every point; and, as she once desperately attempted to veer in the smoke, the sloop-of-war raked the whole length of her decks with murderous precision. In a few minutes more the Hollander was again within half pistol-shot, and the dark and menacing forms of her boarders thronged her sides, ran up the rigging, and spread themselves in readiness upon her yards.

“Now, now! Sea-wolves!” shouted the boatswain “one fierce, bold struggle at last! the pistol, the sword and the boarding-pike!—down with the slaves when they leap on our decks! here they come—be steady, my wolves!”

There was a momentary silence—an instant when even the sound of musquetry was stilled, and scarce a murmur could be detected, but the

sullen wash of the sea against the sides of either vessel ; yard swayed against yard, and the grim forms of boarders with cutlasses, flashing through the obscurity of the thick air, were about to spring on the mainchains and quarter of the pirate, when a crash was heard, after the report of the last gun of the Sea-wolf, and the foremast of the Hollander, vibrating for a moment like a wand swung half round, then fell aft into the mainshrouds, and bore down in its ruin the greater part of the rigging and cordage of the vessel. The Dutch commander appeared for an instant panic-struck ; then, instead of cheering on his boarders and lashing the vessels together, that the chase might not escape, he shouted to his crew to clear away the foremast, and run again to their guns.

Campbell half opened his eyes as he lay upon the deck ; the crash of timber, and a sort of exulting cry from his comrades, appeared to have revived his sinking strength. The dying Falconer started on his feet, waved his sword over his head, and with a feeble shout, called on his men to rally, for one bold effort for life and freedom.

Again were the two combatants apart ; falling off from the wind, the sloop of war went astern of her chase ; and the more daring of her crew, who had ventured on the decks of the Sea-wolf, were mercilessly hurled over her quarters into the sea.

The dismantled Hollander, driving like a log before the wind, now occasionally fired a volley of musquetry at her opponent ; while a solitary gun roared out at intervals through the smoke, more like a signal of distress than a sign of defiance and attack.

The boatswain saw his moment of escape : the lower masts of the Sea-wolf were yet entire, and there was a sail or two in tolerable trim, by which he could tack, or steady her against the wind. There was little apprehension, in so rough a sea, from the Dutchman's boats ; and he had soon the satisfaction of beholding the sloop every moment driving far to leeward of her chase, in spite of every exertion of her crew and commander.

“ There he goes — the devil himself at the helm,” cried the boatswain ; “ the black-muzzled chaser a heap of ruins. 'Strikes me we've the night in our favour, and were it not for the groaners,—poor fellows, they lay about like small birds after a hail-storm, or poisoned flies in a cheesemonger's window — we've a chance of getting into smooth water, and refitting our craft, ere His Majesty's cruisers have run us aboard ! How fares our leader ?”

Falconer was dying. — But Campbell, who had only been stunned by a blow from the fall of a spar, was now sitting up, gazing rather wildly around him ; but recovering soon afterwards from the effects of his contusion, he was able to attend to the duties of his station, and to take the command of the ship.

The deck of the Sea-wolf presented a picture of ruin and desolation ; several maimed and wounded sailors were to be seen crawling amid the wreck of broken spars and planks, with parched and burning throats, ejaculating at times for help, or frantically demanding, of some dead or senseless companion, a little fresh water to quench their thirst.

Campbell and the boatswain did all that lay in their power to relieve the sufferers, and restore

order to the decks of the Sea-wolf. They also attempted to repair a few of the principal sails, and direct their vessel's course towards the nearest land on the French coast, well aware that such was their only chance of escape or preservation.

Falconer was laid on a rough mattress on the quarter-deck, under the idea that the warm breath of the wind, which seemed dying away with the sunset, might revive his sinking frame. His once bright eyes were glazed ; but as they wandered in the direction of the sloop-of-war, a flush of exultation came over his pallid cheek. He was surrounded by a group of sturdy veterans, who never before shed tears, or knew till then how deep a hold their commander, with all his errors, had over their rough hearts.

Campbell stood with folded arms, gazing moodily upon the deck ; while the countenance of the boatswain, as he sat on the carriage of a dismounted gun, resting his hands and chin upon the hilt of his cutlass, appeared endowed with a savager expression than it ever evinced in the moment of combat ; as though he were endeavouring to baffle some unwonted emotions, betrayed by a quick movement of the lips, and a contraction of the brow. The crew appeared powerfully interested by the scene, and several of them stole away, at times, from duties now more than ever urgent, to gaze on their dying chief. One sailor, in particular, a noted smuggler, came and sat himself down slyly at the feet of Falconer ; and pulling out of his pocket some leaves of an old prayer-book, commenced spelling aloud, in a mournful voice, part of their contents : he was for some time appa-

rently unnoticed, until one or two most unfortunate blunders, which excited the audible merriment of a sailor-lad beside him, aroused Campbell from his reverie; and at a frown from the commander, the innocent cause of mirth so ill-timed, withdrew; and the party sank again in silence.

"Falconer," at length said Campbell, "dear Falconer, can you not speak to me?"

"He's dumb-founded for ever in this world," said the boatswain. "Hang it! it strikes me, forcibly"— and choked with grief, the old seaman was unable to utter another word.

"Campbell," said Falconer, in a hurried voice, "'tis the bell of St. Ulmer's Convent; I heard it, on the night when I met you in Flanders—do not send for a priest—promise me that—promise me that."

"Your pulse beats wildly, Falconer."

"It has done so ever since I was born!" was the reply." Ha! the cutter sinks! lower! lower; her deck—now her shrouds are under water—her cross-trees! and now her pendant curls upon the waves!"

"What, the Greyhound, captain?" exclaimed the boatswain in amazement, and he let his cutlass clash upon the deck.

"They crowd around me!" shouted Falconer, wildly, as he sprang upon his feet. "They crowd around me—five tall ships, with topsails, royals, and skysails, all abroad! See, 'tis Herbert! I know him by the glitter of his eyes in the dark, and the forked light of his sword."

The Highlander seized the arm of the dying

chief; he grew calm in a moment, and sank down on his couch.

“ Campbell,” at length he said, “ it is all over—do the best you can for the poor fellows who have followed me. See her, speak to her, and tell her how I have loved her!—Are these tears?”—he threw himself back, and continued for some minutes silent; then, with a smile upon his lips, he said faintly—“ Though much of a smuggler, I was something of a philosopher, in my college days, Campbell! so I was thinking of an aphorism to die with, on my lips, since I have no mantle to wrap around me, and cannot even like a wounded lion, majestically, die without a murmur—ha! a gun!”

A loud explosion was heard, and a volume of flame and smoke rolled along the deck. A match, or some mouldering touch-wood, probably forgotten in the fury of the conflict, had communicated with the cartridges and powder stowed under the fore-deck. The quarter-deck was in a moment deserted. For a few minutes there was a wild and fierce contention of the exhausted energies of the crew to smother the flame, and preserve their vessel. But, after making use of every means which lay in their power, baffled, and unsuccessful, they were beaten back from the fore part of the ship, by the heat and fury of the flames.

They paused in consternation; but there was no time for doubt and delay; a dozen hatchets were at work in another moment, upon the spars, yards, masts, nay, even the planks of the deck in the attempt to construct a raft. The flames already mounted the rigging and sails of the foremast, and cast a lurid glare far over the sea. It was night-

fall; and the low murmurs of the waves sounded in fearful monotony with the crackling of timber, and the quick and hurried ejaculations of despair. Falconer was for a time forgotten. At length, when the approach of the flames admitted no farther delay, and most of the crew, with a few necessary articles, were embarked upon the raft, Campbell, the boatswain, and one or two others, approached the couch of the dying smuggler.

They told him that they were come to bear him away from his ship—to place him in comparative safety among his friends and companions. They were startled by a direct refusal; by a prayer that they would leave him alone to die.

In vain, Campbell implored. Every moment of delay was full of peril, the very planks upon which the seamen stood, appeared to glow with heat, and the fierce element, which raged from the fore-part of the vessel, rolled at times its volume over the heads of the little party, collected around the dying man.

The crew upon the raft, fearful of a second explosion, shouted to Campbell. The Highlander, though he saw that Falconer could not probably survive many minutes, and that the very act of removing him might occasion his death, still refused to quit the Sea-wolf without him. The old boatswain, with tears in his eyes, now came to bid his dying commander a last farewell. "Good bye, captain, good bye my noble fellow! cheer up, 'strikes me we shall never meet again on deck in this world. You are going on a voyage of discovery, and may chance, like Columbus, to hit upon a new and a better world, or, be swamped.

on some unknown breakers. Don't know much about the latitude and longitude of t'other place myself; hope we shall meet again—if there be any ships, and sea there, our merits won't be overlooked as sailors; so cheer up my lad! we've as good a chance as the best of them. Good bye, God bless you, you can't hold many minutes—a brave boat the Sea-wolf! noble fellow for a captain! stout chap myself. Holloa there! going without your boatswain, you devils"—and these were the last words that Falconer heard, as the old seaman leaped upon the raft. Campbell folded his arms, and muttered a few words, the import of which seemed to be, that he would die by the side of his ill-fated comrade. Falconer opened his eyes, and slightly moved his hand, as though he would beckon him away.

Then it was, that the two seamen, who stood impatiently awaiting Campbell's departure, seized him forcibly by the arms, and ere he was aware of their intention, led him up to the gangway, and made him descend over her side into the raft. By the use of oars, and paddles, and part of an old jib, which the sailors spread out upon a spar, they were enabled to make sufficient way to get clear of the burning ship. Every object around them would have been obscured in the darkness of the night, were it not for the glare which the fire cast over the deep.

Yet, the vividness of the flames was at times diminished by an immense volume of smoke, which sweeping fold after fold over the ship's stern, rolled far along the sea.

There was a fearful grandeur in the scene, a

startling and almost supernatural effect, as the tall flames rose and fell, and a red shadow leaped upon the waters.

But there was soon a change in the appearance of the Sea-wolf; the dense smoke had passed away; she was burning as fiercely as ever, but, as if borne along by a sudden gust of wind, she altered her course, and came rushing by the raft, as though she would have borne down all upon it beneath her bows.

A small vessel had approached so near, as to be seen following almost immediately in her wake. A breeze had again sprung up, and the sea dashing against the raft, threatened every moment, the separation of its loosely connected spars and planks, and the destruction of its crew.

Then it was that the smugglers sent a wild cry across the waters; despair had conquered their sullen resolution to die without a murmur. Several vessels were seen in the distance, flitting along the horizon, changing in form and appearance with the ever varying light and shade.

The Sea-wolf was now apparently far distant; the flames every moment seemed to grow less and less; the fitful glare which at one time rose high above her decks, had died away into a dull, red light, as though the vessel were now burning nigh to the water's edge. Again rose the fearful cry of desperation. It was answered by the report of a gun from the burning ship: the smugglers started — it was as though the very elements had mockingly replied to their prayers and exclamations. Another — then in a longer interval, another gun, sounded over the deep. They stilled their shouts,

they forgot their danger in the awful sublimity of the scene.

“ He is dead,” said the boatswain, grasping the arm of his new commander—“ he is dead !” then after looking on for some time in silence, he added, “ ‘tis the minute-gun, which *they* are firing over his grave.”

Campbell answered not. He kept his eyes fixed on the Sea-wolf ; gradually the burning hull grew less and less : at last, in the far-off horizon, it seemed to glare redly above the waves, altered its appearance, glittered like a star, and then — was lost !

CONCLUSION.

WITH a grateful but a saddened heart, Maria Woodville entered the hall of her forefathers ; she found it a house of mourning. The passionate burst of grief which fell from the lips of the orphan girl was in strange contrast to the feelings of her domestics, as crowding around her, though with tears in their eyes, they could hardly disguise the joy that they felt at her preservation and arrival.

Paul Mowbray had vowed not to survive his master many days ; but when he beheld his “ darling young favourite,” as he would call her, restored to life and safety — though her cheek had lost its bloom, her eyes their brightness, and her voice faltered as she breathed forth his name, he forgot his vow, or rather gladly revoked it, under the plea that he ought yet to live, to devote the remainder of his services to the daughter of the last male descendant of the Woodvilles.

Time passed on, and the violence of grief, like that of all other passions, subsided. And yet there

were moments when even the affectionate voice of one now doubly endeared to her, could not soothe the gloom of care away from that lovely brow, over which early sorrow had swept so wildly — times, even in after years, when she shed tears over the grave of her once stern and unbending father. Yet was there one tie left that bound Maria Woodville to the world ; one being who now sought, by the most devoted affection, to atone for the misery and misfortune which his impetuosity had in part entailed on her he loved. *They* were happy : not as the world generally interprets this word ; but in the calm, holy, quiet of domestic duties ; the deep retirement and pure enjoyments of a country life.

Yet the brow of Herbert at times would darken, as the picture of past scenes rose vividly before him, while the melting and innocent eyes of his Maria met his glance at the accidental mention of a forbidden name, as though she doubted if for a moment that even he had power to protect her.

Paul Mowbray long continued to hold his office, and possess uncontrolled authority over every antiquity which the mansion contained. Chronicling, with increasing care, every legend of ancestral deeds, as he grew older, waxing every year more diffuse and enthusiastic ; mingling his descriptions of the various worthies who frowned grimly from the tapestried arras of the state-room, or the elaborately carved panels of the picture hall, with all the wondrous exploits of romance and chivalry, which he had conned and studied in his younger days.

But here we must take leave of the worthy seneschal of Woodlands, to briefly notice the com-

panions of Miss Woodville in her escape from the Sea-wolf. The Leopard did not long survive the effect of the wound which he had received. Old Gull, though supported for some time by a small annuity from Herbert, under the pledge that he abandoned his roving habits, felt his amphibious propensities recur so strongly one fine morning at the sight of the ocean, that he suddenly left the neighbourhood, and was never after seen; though it was more than once whispered by his intimate acquaintances, that he had gone on a voyage of discovery, to search for the remains of old Peter, his former friend and crony.

Handspike, though well rewarded for the part which he had taken in the escape from the Sea-wolf, found, on his arrival at home, that domestic affairs had not gone on quite so smoothly in his absence as he could have wished. His seven little red-haired children were abandoned by their mother, who, tempted by the mustachoes of Sergeant Munro, had consented to take a trip with him across the Irish channel — for the season.

The sailor endeavoured, in the best manner possible, to solace himself under this bereavement; and when, in a few months afterwards, he heard of his Polly's demise, occasioned by a chance-blow from a shillelah in a row at an Irish funeral, he came to the determination to try his fate once more in the matrimonial line.

Rigging himself out in his best, and filling his waistcoat pocket with a double allowance of tobacco, to support him under so arduous an undertaking, he went boldly up to the door of the little

inn at Basingtree, and, in a straight-forward, and sailor-like manner, at once bluntly solicited the hand of the fair Lucy Culver. He swore, that he was desperately attached to her, and dated the origin of his affection from the moment when he heard her screaming from the back kitchen, at the report of the fire-arms of Munro and his comrades. The soft-hearted landlady was not a little surprised at this declaration ; but not knowing what to say, and being much too good-tempered, to hurt any one's feelings, particularly those of the father of seven "orphanless" children, as Handspike called them, she looked unutterable things, and finally consented to marry the sailor on the first day in the ensuing week. Accordingly, in due time the bells of the village church rang a merry peal, and Lucy Culver, widow, was united to Thomas Handspike, late marine of the smuggling dogger, "The Two Sisters." Many a pleasant evening and jovial hour did the sailor spend, surrounded by his double progeny, under the broad sign-board of the little inn, cracking his jokes, and sipping his grog ; while he told his marvellous tale of the old Prophet and the Sea-wolf, to the no small edification of the numerous gossips, that were wont on such occasions to gather round his door.

Little was ever heard of the crew of the Sea-wolf, beyond the circumstance, that they were rescued by a French brig from their perilous situation, a few hours after the disappearance of the burning ship. Most of them, probably, returned to their former occupations. Campbell, it was supposed, drew out for many years a miserable exist-

ence in poverty and obscurity, in a small fishing town on the Flemish coast. His daring spirit was broken, no doubt, by care and misfortune ; but of his ultimate fate, nothing certain was ever known.

THE END.

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